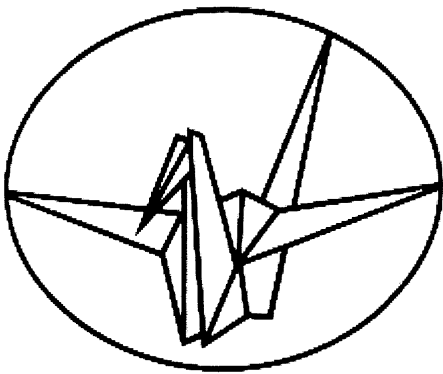


From Hibakusha to You

What We Want to Convey



**Japan Confederation of
A-and H-Bomb Sufferers
Organizations
(Nihon Hidankyo)**

In order to ensure that no more Hibakusha will be created again, Hibakusha have appealed to the world the reality and aftereffects of the atomic bombing, despite facing the suffering from the atomic bombing on their minds and bodies. Aspiring to achieve a world without nuclear weapons, Hibakusha want to convey the following message to future generations.

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Symbol mark of Nihon Hidankyo designed by KATAOKA Shu: Orizuru paper crane symbolizes eternal peace and the ellipse represents “harmony”, meaning unity of people’s hearts.

Preface

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons entered into force on January 22, 2021. For the first time in the 76 years since the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, international law has declared nuclear weapons to be “illegal” in any sense of the word.

It is now 65 years since A-bomb survivors formed a national organization, the Japan Confederation of A-and H-Bomb Sufferers Organizations (Nihon Hidankyo, formed in 1956). It has been a long, long road for the Hibakusha, who, based on their own experiences, have demanded that no one in the world be made an atomic bomb survivor, claiming that humans and nuclear weapons cannot coexist, and stating that they want to pave the way to the elimination of nuclear weapons in their lifetime.

The images of their families and friends, and the many dead whose lives were taken by the atomic bombs, as well as the predecessors of the Hibakusha movement who passed away without witnessing this day, came to the forefront of the Hibakusha’s minds.

The Hibakusha are proud that the efforts of Nihon Hidankyo, which has persevered against all odds from its founding to the present day, have reached the people of the world and brought the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons into effect. Before the entry into force of the Treaty, TANAKA Terumi, Co-Chairperson of Nihon Hidankyo, said, “We are now halfway to the abolition of nuclear weapons,” and continued, “The other half will also be a tough road ahead.”

There are many challenges remaining if the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is to be truly the beginning of the end of nuclear weapons. There are still 13,400 nuclear weapons in existence. The nuclear weapon States, countries that depend on nuclear “deterrence,” and above all Japan, which calls itself the “only country to have suffered the atomic bombings in war,” are turning their backs on the treaty.

In this booklet, we look back on the path taken by the Hibakusha over the past 65 years as they rose up from the devastation of the atomic bombings to “save humanity from its crisis through the lessons learned from our experiences, while at the same time saving ourselves” (“Message to the World”, the founding declaration of Nihon Hidankyo) and, above all, to ensure that “no more Hibakusha will be created again”. The Hibakusha, who experienced the “hell” of the atomic bombing for the first time in

human history and have lived with the suffering of their bodies, lives, and minds, have called on all the countries of the world to abolish nuclear weapons. We do not want anyone to experience the “A-bomb hell” or even “life as an A-bomb survivor” ever again.

What has the Hibakusha movement built in the face of the “atomic bombing”? Why have the Hibakusha continued to demand, and why do they still demand, the abolition of nuclear weapons and State compensation for the A-bomb damage?

Tracing the history of the Hibakusha movement, we hope that you will join us in discussing how we can bring an end to the nuclear age.

I. What the Atomic Bomb Brought to Humans

1. Damages Caused by the Use of Nuclear Weapons for the First Time in Human History

Unprecedented experiences

An atomic bomb dropped by the US forces exploded in the sky, at the height of approximately 600 meters, over the City of Hiroshima at 8:15 a.m. on August 6, 1945. Three days later, on August 9, another bomb exploded, at the height of approximately 500 meters, over the City of Nagasaki at 11:02 a.m. The fireballs created by the explosions reached some millions of degrees Celsius in the sky, and they remained at from 3,000 to 5,000 degrees even on the ground. The strong heat rays started fires as far as around 2 kilometers from the hypocenters and killed and injured many. The air blasts from the explosions were massive enough to crush in an instant all wooden houses within a radius of 1.5 kilometers from the hypocenters.

In this way, the atomic bombs brought strong heat rays and air blasts such as no other weapons had been able to do before. However, a decisive difference was that they released *radiation* that destroyed human cells and injured human genes. The atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki utilized the energy released from the nuclear fission of uranium and plutonium, respectively. The horror of the atomic bomb can be understood not only in the scale of the devastation at the time of the explosion, but also through its long-lasting effects on the human body.

Some could escape the heat waves and blasts at the time of the explosion; others entered the cities afterward to search and rescue or to cremate family members. But they too, one after another, succumbed to death by acute radiation syndrome. By the end of that year, 1945, more than 140,000 people had died in Hiroshima and more than 70,000 in Nagasaki. Those who somehow managed to survive the bombings had to live with the fear of death from the radiation of the bomb.

Few of those who experienced the atomic bomb could figure out what happened on that day. Not a few testimonies were along the lines of "(I believed) my home had been directly hit by a bomb," or "I thought a gas tank nearby had been bombed." It was not until they went outside that they witnessed a scene that could only be described as "hell":

“Heaps of burnt bodies, inflamed and swollen; bodies with eyeballs protruding and burst bellies; burnt-out street cars full of passengers; people trapped and incinerated under collapsed buildings; lines of ghost-like figures with skin hanging down in strips. It was a sight so horrible as never to be imagined in this world.”
(*Atomic Bomb Victims’ Demand, 1984*)

The atomic bomb brought harm and injury such as had never been experienced before in human history. It was an endpoint of the cruelty of the “strategic bombings”, which, by indiscriminate wholesale slaughter, aimed to make civilians lose the will to fight. The atomic bombs that destroyed the two cities in an instant not only caused physical destruction, but also damaged thoroughly the foundation of people’s life and denied them as human beings. Now the nuclear age had come true. WATANABE Chieko, whose lower body was crushed by the bomb, described herself as “a human who was forced to experience the first strike of the possible extinction of the human race” (at an NGO International Conference in Geneva, 1978).

Twelve years of covering up the damages of the atomic bombs and the abandonment of the Hibakusha

What have the governments of Japan and the United States done in the face of the unknown nature of the damages caused by the atomic bombs? At the time when the victims needed the most help, the US occupation forces hid the damage caused by the bombs. (Japan was occupied by the Allies led by the United States from September 2, 1945, to April 28, 1952.)

On August 9, 1945, having heard of the disaster in Hiroshima, Dr. Marcel Junod, a Swiss doctor and the chief representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross in Japan who had been in Japan to investigate the Allies’ POWs, made an urgent request for medicines and other aid materials to the General Headquarters of the Allied Powers (GHQ). The request was honored with 15 tons of medicines to Hiroshima. Further aid, however, was forbidden. On August 30, Douglas MacArthur, the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers, landed at the Atsugi Base. On September 6, at an international press conference in Tokyo, Brigadier General Thomas F. Farrell, the head of the US Atomic Bomb Survey and the deputy of the Manhattan Project, declared, in essence: “Everyone in Hiroshima and Nagasaki who was fated to die from the atomic bomb has already died. There are no longer any people suffering from radiation exposure as of today, in early September” (TAKAHASHI Hiroko, *Classified Hiroshima and Nagasaki: U.S. Nuclear Test and Civil Defense Program, Gaifusha Publishing Inc.*,

2008).¹ On September 9, GHQ began pre-censorship of five Tokyo newspapers and on the 19th, they issued the Press Code (Memorandum concerning Press Code for Japan). After that, reports on the atomic bomb were concealed.

In October 1945, two months after the bombings, the Japanese government, on their part, closed down the emergency rescue and aid stations, which had been established by the War-time Disaster Protection Act. The law itself lost its effect in September 1946. They abandoned the victims and orphans, pushing them into diseases and poverty. Even doctors had little knowledge of the atomic bomb diseases, which kept the sufferers in pain without treatment.

In March 1947, the Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission (ABCC), which was established in accordance with a presidential directive to the National Academy of Sciences, opened its office in the Hiroshima Red Cross Hospital. They started blood testing there in April and began examining in Nagasaki in July. The ABCC, however, was an investigative and research institution designed to prepare for future nuclear wars. It did not provide any treatment for the Hibakusha. Therefore, not a few victims refused to cooperate with them, saying, "We are not guinea pigs." The researchers took the results of their examinations with them to the United States.

During this period, also called "the 10-year void", both the governments of Japan and the United States not only failed to clarify the damages caused by the atomic bombs, but actively concealed them. It was not until 1957 that the Atomic Bomb Medical Treatment Act came into effect, following the founding of the Japan Confederation of A-and H-Bomb Sufferers Organizations (Nihon Hidankyo) in 1956. Already 12 years had passed since the atomic bombings.

Investigative research by Nihon Hidankyo: Revealing the damages by the victims themselves

The life of the victims of the atomic bombs resumed with their search for the reality of the damages, while fighting the pain caused by the bombs.

Since 1965 the Japanese government has conducted surveys on the conditions of the Hibakusha; yet, they would not attempt to make clear the pain and suffering of the Hibakusha and the overall picture of the damage caused by the bomb. The government has not even bothered to make an effort to let the world know, as the A-bombed

1 Translator's note: This statement by General Farrell is well-known in Japan; however, the exact wording is yet to be verified.

nation, the reality by publishing, for example, a white paper on the damage caused by the atomic bomb.

The Hibakusha, who lived in Hiroshima and Nagasaki as well as in other prefectures throughout Japan, organized an association of A-bomb survivors in each of their locations. They have kept doing a variety of actions assisted by Nihon Hidankyo, the national organization created out of the regional associations in 1956. They put their indescribable experiences into words and testified; they wrote their experiences down for the record. They also conducted both small- and large-scale investigations, such as, among others, the nationwide survey of the Hibakusha in preparation for the “International Symposium on the Damage and After-Effects of the Atomic Bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki (1977)” and the “Survey of the Atomic Bomb Victims (1985)”. It can be said that the overall picture of the damage inflicted by the atomic bombs—what the atomic bomb did to humans, what it is still doing, and how it has brought harm to all aspects of human existence beyond time and place—has been investigated and clarified by the victims themselves. Furthermore, Nihon Hidankyo has been seeking responsibility for why the damage of the atomic bombs came about, as well as trying to find a way to prevent the victimhood that they suffered from ever being repeated again.

2. Inhumane Nature of the Atomic Bombs Does Not Allow Victims to Live or to Die as Humans

From autumn 1985 to spring 1986, Nihon Hidankyo carried out a “Survey of the Atomic Bomb Victims”, which covered 13,168 atomic bomb survivors and more than 220 deceased victims’ family members who were not exposed to atomic bomb radiation. The number of the dead reported by those who responded to the survey exceeded 12,000.

The stories recorded in this survey and other research reveal the features of what the atomic bomb did to humanity, as described below. (In the parentheses at the end of each account are indicated the place, distance from the hypocenter/situation, sex, and age at the time of the atomic bombing, and place of residence when surveyed. Unless otherwise stated, the account is quoted from the Survey of the Atomic Bomb Victims (1985)).

Realities of A-bombings (1) “Hell” of “That day”

Indiscriminate death: 65% or two thirds of those “killed that day” (August 6 in Hiroshima and August 9 in Nagasaki) were children aged 9 or younger (18%), women between the ages of 10 and 59 (39%) and the elderly of both sexes aged 60 and over (8%). The atomic bombs are nothing but “weapons of annihilation” that kill all these non-combatants without discrimination.

Horrible death: Most of the dead on “that day” (60% or more) were either killed “by explosion outside” or “trapped and incinerated under collapsed buildings”. They had no time to escape from the fallen houses and were burnt alive, with no one to save them from the fire. Many were not able to respond to the voices asking for help. Those who survived can never forget what they saw: the images of people dying horrible deaths, such as can hardly be called deaths of human beings, and of their immense suffering.

- Their corpses were cremated with wood piled up in a playground of an elementary school. It was something like broiling fish. Still now I am horrified to remember the scene. (Nagasaki, 3.0km, Male, Age 18, Saitama Prefecture)

- Near the air-raid shelter where I stayed temporarily, dead bodies were taken and piled up every day. Oil was poured on those bodies and they were burnt just like paper. (Hiroshima, 2.0km, Female, Age 29, Osaka Prefecture)

- I was in the second grade of elementary school. It is awful for me to recall that day. In an instant, the accident changed my life from front to back and everything I saw was a living hell...Everybody was wearing rags like beggars. Everything was so mad and hellish, so mad that we could see off those poor dying people without a word. “As they were human beings, I wish I could have let them die as human beings.” (Nagasaki, 2.0km, Female, Age 8, Ishikawa Prefecture)

Unconfirmed death: Among the death toll, only 4% were able to be with their families when they died, and 42% are still missing. No bodies or remains have ever been found to confirm their death. Atomic bombs forced the victims to die “unconfirmed deaths”. The bereaved families therefore cannot accept the deaths of their close relatives, and live in agony imagining how they ended their lives.

- In the morning mother saw me off cheerfully. She was crushed under the fallen house in Hiratsuka-cho and burnt to death. We never got her ashes. I couldn't believe that mother was dead, remembering that she saw me off as usual when I left home to be mobilized for work. I waited for her to come back. The sounds of wind made me go out of the door, looking for mother. I kept her name

on the family register for a long time. (Hiroshima, 2.0km, Female, Age unknown, Hiroshima Prefecture)

- My elder sister was in the first year at girls' high school, and was mobilized with her whole class, led by the teacher, for the cleanup after the building removal. They were at 800m from the hypocenter... My parents looked around the city for her, but in vain. My father kept blaming himself until the day he died for not having been able to find her... Whenever he saw a group of school girls, their copper-colored faces swollen to twice their normal size, he asked them, "Are you Masako? Aren't you Masako?" But none of them responded and he could not find the face of his daughter among them. (Hiroshima, in utero, female, Chiba Prefecture, from a lecture record)

In Hiroshima, among the students who were mobilized to clean up the demolished buildings to create firebreaks, more than 6,000 died and many remain missing to this day.

Unable to rescue: The atomic bomb completely destroyed the city functions in a flash. Organized disaster prevention and rescue operations were totally impossible. In such extreme situations, everyone faced no choice but to escape: parents abandoned their children in the fire, children their parents, husbands their wives, and wives their husbands. They were not only unable to rescue their close relatives, but also unable to respond to the voices of others asking for help or for water.

"I was not a human being at that time" – one of every four Hibakushas is still tormented by remorse, traumatized by what they experienced "that day". The atomic bomb created a "hell" on earth, a situation beyond human comprehension in which human beings lost all senses, unable to feel pain, fear or grief. That experience was deeply etched into their minds, an unhealed emotional wound that they would carry for the rest of their lives.

- Running all the way home, I met many people who had their skin peeling and falling down like rags, until at last I arrived at our house. Remembering this, I think I did not hear any voice from the people I met, other than cries and screaming. Most of them were silent, with no emotion on their faces. Looking back to that day, I feel that it was not a human world; what I saw was the hell of another world. Nevertheless, I felt nothing, no matter what I saw or I heard. I believe my nerves were paralyzed. I came to know that humans could not behave as humans in such abnormal conditions. This is truly dreadful. (Hiroshima, 3.0km, Female, Age 15, Hyogo Prefecture)

- Whenever I hear or talk about that day, I always lose my composure and I become choked with a tightening feeling. If I force myself to talk, I feel as if I am going to go insane, so it's impossible for me to talk about it. The scene of my younger brother's death is printed on my memory. I called his name (to wake him up), but he didn't answer, so I ran away from there. I still wonder, what if he wasn't dead? What if he had only lost consciousness? And I'm shaken with the thought, feeling heartbroken. (Nagasaki, 2.0km, Male, Age 12, Miyagi Prefecture)

- From the moment I was rescued, the only thing I had on my mind was the survival of my son and myself. While I was fleeing, I felt someone grab my leg. It was a child with one of his/her eyes popped out and stuck to the center of the face. That eye was glaring up at me. "One-eyed goblin!" I yelled and kicked him away. I was scared out of my mind. A one-eyed goblin was coming after me. All I could do was run away... I was helped out by the couple next door, but I helped no one. There is a saying, "Even demons cry," but I was not even a demon. (Hiroshima, 1.7km, Female, Age 23, Tokyo, from a booklet *Hibakushas' Witness Activities*)

Realities of A-bombings (2) Death thereafter/ Living as Hibakusha

Acute atomic diseases: In days after "that day", the Hibakusha died one after another. By the end of August, deaths from atomic diseases exceeded the number of those who died of "burns", accounting for 60% of all deaths. Radiation-induced acute symptoms included fever, diarrhea, vomiting, bleeding (purpura), stomatitis, hair loss, headache, stomachache, and disturbed consciousness. Seeing others around them dying, they were struck by the "fear of their own death", and died in agony.

Long-tormented death: Of the 7,030 deaths after 1946, reported in the survey of the bereaved, more than 90% died "delayed deaths caused by the atomic bomb," after suffering unspeakable pains. Many of them "became prone to illness after exposure to atomic-bomb radiation," and had to spend "days of struggle against diseases" in "constant anxiety and fear of atomic-bomb diseases" until they died.

They not only died but faced hardships in all aspects of their lives, because they "lost support to live after the deaths of their close relatives," were "not able to work as desired," "impoverished after the atomic bombing," "tormented by the experience of that day," or were "concerned about children."

Delayed A-bomb death: "Diseases" were responsible for about 90% of all deaths, and death from "cancers" strikingly increased after 10 years from the atomic bombing

and have continued to rise. Cancers have been particularly common among those who at the time of the bombing were in their twenties and thirties, which, for the bereaved, was interpreted to mean “they died too soon”. This has also been a ground for “anxiety of atomic-bomb diseases” connected with the “fear of death”.

Of all Hibakusha deaths after 1946, not more than 10% of the bereaved think the deaths were “not related to the atomic bomb.” Half of them believe the deaths were caused by the atomic bombs, and the other 40% are not able to figure it out. In other words, the bereaved of 90% of the dead cannot deny their suspicion that the deaths were induced by atomic-bomb radiation, that is to say “delayed deaths”.

- On October 1 that year school was reopened. Of the 320 students in the same grade as me, only some 20 came back. Most of them were my classmates. But they died one after another from the aftereffects of the atomic bombing. One classmate would pass away, then another would go about one or two months later... Imagine if you saw flowers on some of the desks in your classroom all the time. I felt helpless, seized by the fear that I might be the next one to die, and always worried about how long I would be alive. One of my classmates was too overwhelmed to do anything. (Hiroshima, entered the city after the bombing, Male, Age 13, Niigata Prefecture, *Hibakushas' Witness Activities*)

- There was nothing to compare to my grief; when the doctor diagnosed the illness of my younger brother (exposed to radiation at 1.2km, age 4, died in 1960) as leukemia, after we had barely survived the A-bombing and had endured a hard life. I still cannot forget him, who had to die suffering in pain though he survived to the age of 18. (Nagasaki, 1.5km, Female, Age 4, Nagasaki)

- My younger sister (age 24) was married at the time and entered the city after the bomb. She had no special trouble right after the bombing. However, she got leukemia and died in great pain on September 20, 1957. She was then 36 years old. I realized the horror of the A-bomb from the fact that my sister died of leukemia so suddenly, though she had only entered the city after the bomb, while I, who was directly exposed to the bomb and burnt so badly, am still alive. (Hiroshima, 2.0 km, Female, Age 31, Hiroshima)

Life filled with anxiety and pains

“I wonder what I was born for.” “I live in agony.” These words tell us that the pain those who died went through was indeed the “pain of living” endured by the surviving Hibakusha. Only 18% of the respondents said that they “did not experience any

particular hardship because of the atomic bombing.”

Living with worries: The biggest concern for the Hibakusha is their health. They “become uneasy when they feel ill, wondering if it is because of the exposure to atomic-bomb (62%), and “have anxiety about possible onset of atomic bomb-induced diseases” (52%). Also, three-quarters of the Hibakusha are always worried about living, as well as the health and future of their children and grandchildren.

87% of those with experience of acute radiation illness feel “anxieties” of being Hibakusha. Of those who did not suffer acute disease, more than 50% feel more or less the same kind of worries, because they cannot deny the possibility of having been exposed to atomic-bomb radiation.

We can see the Hibakusha’s “fears” have an objective ground. In other words, “fears” themselves are the damage caused by the atomic bomb.

Fear of “delayed atomic bomb death”: The doubt that the deaths they witnessed were “delayed atomic-bomb deaths” led the survivors to worry that they would also die “delayed deaths”. With cancers having become the symbol of atomic bomb diseases, this anxiety is connected with the “fear of death”. It was 40 years after the atomic bombing when the Survey of the Atomic Bomb Victims was carried out. At the time, the Hibakusha were living in this “fear of death”, and they still do so today.

Facing atomic bomb in life stages: In such life-stage events as getting a job, marriage and childbirth, which are supposed to be happy occasions for all, as well as in family life and childrearing, the Hibakusha have had to face the facts of their exposure to atomic-bomb radiation. There is no way for them to forget or escape from the suffering caused by the atomic bomb. Also, they have faced discrimination and prejudice against them because of their atomic bomb experience. Being Hibakusha, they were not able to find a job, their marriages broke up, and when they became pregnant, they were told not to give birth to the child. Many Hibakusha therefore chose to live without telling anyone that they were Hibakusha and told their children to keep their mouths shut about the atomic bombing.

- My family members died of cancer one after another. I’m worried about myself until I die. (Nagasaki, 1.2km, Female, Age 16, Yamaguchi Prefecture, 1984 Survey on Hibakusha’s Demands)

- As my white blood cell counts become unstable, I feel unsure about my health. I get mentally anxious, worrying when and what kind of disease I will get. (Hiroshima, entered the city after the bombing, Male, Age 34, Wakayama Prefecture, 1984 Survey on Hibakusha’s Demands)

- I walk with a limp. Others mimicked me or said that they could easily find me wherever I was. I wish I could walk just once, in stiletto heels like others. (Nagasaki, 2.2km, Female, Age 3, Nagasaki, 1984 Survey on Hibakusha's Demands)

- I want my life without the name "Hibakusha" back. (Nagasaki, 2.1km, Male, Age 9, Osaka, 1984 Survey on Hibakusha's Demands)

- When we got married, I was shocked that my husband told me to keep my exposure to atomic-bomb radiation secret. Even now, his relatives don't know about it. (Nagasaki, 3.5km, Female, Age 7, Kanagawa Prefecture, 70th Year Survey on Hibakusha)

Loss of will to live: Many of the Hibakusha who were forced to live such painful lives ended up losing their will to live. "I'd rather die than suffer like this," "I wish I had died at that time," were the words of those who in despair once lost their will to live. They account for 25%, or one out of every four survivors.

Losing the "will to live" means that "living as a Hibakusha" involves pain and anguish unbearable for human beings. This is another proof of the inhumane nature of the atomic bomb. The 12,700 dead reported in the survey included 47 hibakusha who killed themselves. They ended their lives due to multiple "burdens", "long days of struggle against diseases" (38%), in connection with the "fear of death" (11%), in despair "losing all hope for recovery of health" (29%), "with dreams and goals shattered because of the exposure to atomic-bomb radiation" (33%), and "tormented by the experience of that day" (21%).

- My elder brother had half his body burned and the doctor gave up on him, but he somehow managed to survive. He was alive but in constant fear, and when the weather was bad, the burns hurt him even more. Every time a marriage proposal was made for him, he felt troubled because of his physical condition. He lost any sliver of hope because of the unbearable pain of his burns and killed himself. (Hiroshima, 1km, Elder brother killed himself at age 30 in September 1957)

- My father (41 years old), mother (35), brother (12) and sister (2) were all killed on the spot. Their bodies being lost, I cannot tell how or where they died. In a moment, everything around me changed to a heap of rubble, where there lay innumerable people groaning; it was truly a hell on earth. Sixty-four years have passed since then, but I am still dragging the sorrow and pain I experienced at that time. No medicine can heal the wounds in the mind. It might have been better had I died then and there with my parents. (Hiroshima, 1.3km, Female, Age 9, Yamaguchi)

Prefecture, *Message from Hibakusha, 2010*)

Suffering, anxieties for children and grandchildren without end in sight

The Hibakusha have lived with anxieties not only about their own health, but also about the health and future of their children and grandchildren. Those who had children with disabilities and illness worried how their children would live after they themselves died. From early on, the Hibakusha carried out surveys and published white papers on the children of the Hibakusha, in which they demanded the issuance of a certificate of the same sort as the Hibakusha certificate (A-Bomb Sufferers' Health Book) and medical support for children. Some Hibakusha say, "Prejudice still remains against us, and for the sake of my grandchildren's marriages, I never tell anyone that I'm a Hibakusha."

- For the rest of my life, I will continue to fear that my children, grandchildren, and of course I myself might fall ill. Isn't there any escape for me from anxieties until I die? It's so painful. War is hell. You can't forget what you experienced as long as you live. (Nagasaki, 3.6km, Female, Age 7, Fukuoka Prefecture, 70th Year Survey on Hibakusha)

3. The Atomic Bomb and Humans Cannot Coexist: The Weapon of Absolute Evil

The weapon of absolute evil

In 1984 Nihon Hidankyo drew up the Atomic Bomb Victims' Basic Demand based on a variety of investigations and testimonies. Its preamble has the following passages regarding the aftereffects of the atomic bomb:

The atomic bomb has been harming the bodies, lives, and hearts of its victims to this day.

The atomic bomb does not allow its victims to die as humans nor to live like humans. The nuclear weapon, from the beginning, was a mad weapon, the sole purpose of which is "extermination". As humans we can never accept it, for it is the weapon of absolute evil.

From the perspective of "human beings", we declared clearly that nuclear weapons are incompatible with the existence of human beings, that they are anti-human weapons, and that they are weapons of absolute evil that can never be justified whatever the goals.

- I was trying to rescue my mother and asked for help from a neighbor who happened to pass by. But I got the cold shoulder. To this day, I harbor ill-feelings about it. Human beings can be cruel. But I should pay more attention to the inhumanity of the atomic bomb which pushed humans to the brink. (Hiroshima, 1.5km, Male, Age 16, Ishikawa Prefecture)

- Give me back my parents. Give me back humans. Give me back my home and goods. Give me back my happy life before the bombing. (Hiroshima, entered the city after the bombing, Male, Age 16, Nagano Prefecture)

Leading a life resisting the atomic bomb

The 1985 Survey of Atomic Bomb Victims conducted by Nihon Hidankyo requested information regarding “that day”, “deaths since then”, and “life as a Hibakusha”. The information gathered exposed the fact that the damage done by the atomic bomb spread to the victims’ bodies, lives, and hearts, and that it has continued to this day.

For a Hibakusha, what “sustains life” is “to make a stable living surrounded by one’s family” and to lead a normal, peaceful, steady life.

The survey, however, discovered that the greater and more serious the damage that crushed such a usual and normal life, the more diligently the survivors have engaged in the struggle against atomic bombs as their support to live. They have lived “to console the spirits of those who were killed by the atomic bomb”, “to help their fellow Hibakusha”, and further, “to keep telling the story as eyewitnesses to the bombing”, “to live until the passage of the Hibakusha Relief Act”, and “to live to abolish nuclear weapons from this world.” These surely have been the things which have “sustained their lives” since the bombing.

Humans and nuclear weapons cannot coexist. There is only one way “to live” for the Hibakusha: that is “to fight against” and “to resist” the forces that would crush “the will to live”. If humans do not reject nuclear weapons and abolish them, then they reject human beings instead. The victims raised angry voices: “Make amends for our suffering!” They stood up and uttered the words from their inner heart: “I want my body back”; “Compensate my life!”

Based on their experiences, the Hibakusha’s strong wishes are “not to allow another atomic bombing” and “not to allow the suffering that we experienced to be repeated on our children and grandchildren, or, obviously, on anyone in the world.” Nihon Hidankyo has kept working, rallying such wishes of the Hibakusha.

In the next chapter, we shall trace the footsteps of Nihon Hidankyo -- how the organization has been working in order “not to allow anyone else to become a Hibakusha.”

II. Never Again to Create Hibakusha (A- and H-Bomb Victims) -- Advances in the Movement of Nihon Hidankyo

1. Sufferers Themselves Stood up and Founded Nihon Hidankyo

Beginning of the postwar Japan

Towards the end of the 15-Year War, which Japan started with the Manchurian Incident in 1931 and escalated against the United States and the United Kingdom in 1941, the Japanese forces sustained crushing defeats one after the other in and after 1943 and lost their ability to wage war. In 1945, mainland Japan was scorched by a series of air raids. With the shortage of food and commodities, let alone means of combat, people were plunged into extreme hardship. No fighting power was left any more.

The leaders of the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Soviet Union held a conference in Potsdam, a suburb of Berlin, from July 17th in 1945 to determine the postwar policy after World War II. On July 16th, the day before the conference, the United States succeeded in its atomic bomb test and, on the 25th, issued the order to drop atomic bombs on Japan. They announced the Potsdam Declaration on the 26th and demanded that Japan accept it.

While the Japanese Government was lingering and delaying surrender on the ground that maintenance of the Emperor System had not been confirmed, the United States dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima on August 6th and Nagasaki on August 9th. They were the first nuclear attacks in history in which civilians were made the target of mass and indiscriminate killings. The Soviet Union declared war against Japan on the 8th. The Japanese Government finally decided to accept the Potsdam Declaration at *Gozen-Kaigi* (the highest war leaders conference in the presence of the Emperor) on the 10th, issued the Imperial Rescript on Surrender on the 14th, and broadcast this on the radio on the 15th.

Why did the United States dare to drop the two atomic bombs (a uranium bomb and a plutonium one) on Hiroshima and on Nagasaki, even though they knew then that militarily the A-bombings were unnecessary? It is said that it was because the United States wanted to prevail in postwar international politics and because they wanted to conduct nuclear tests to know the “effects” of the bombs. The atomic bombings became the opening of the Cold War and humankind was inevitably plunged into a nuclear age.

After the defeat, Japan was occupied by the Allied Forces (effectively by the United States), and despite the A-bomb victims suffering from acute disorders and food shortage, the reality of the damage caused by the A-bombs was covered up under the press code issued by the Allied Forces.

On November 3rd, 1946, the Constitution of Japan was promulgated. It includes principles of sovereignty with the people, respect for fundamental human rights, and pacifism. Its preamble reads, “...resolved that never again shall we be visited with the horrors of war through the action of government”; and its Article 9 determines to “forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force,” not to “maintain forces,” and not to “recognize the right of belligerency of the State”. A-bomb survivors, who had experienced the hell of A-bombing, welcomed it and made it a guide in their life, believing that “Japan would become a country that goes to war no more.”

Early signs of Hibakusha movements

Even during the period of the occupation, there were actions of people against atomic weapons in the peace, labor, and culture movements. Of these, early signs of a movement by A-bomb survivors themselves might be essay compilation campaigns, which later led to the formation of A-Bomb Sufferers Association in Hiroshima (in August 1952).

“Expressing their experiences in writing enabled them to reaffirm their thoughts. When their writings were published in print, they experienced the pleasure of making themselves understood to unknown people, and gradually they came to feel confident in their own appeals. Through these activities, more and more people became core players in the formation of sufferers’ organizations and participated in the ranks of the movement against atomic bombs” (*In This Corner of the World* by YAMASHIRO Tomoe, Iwanami Shinsho, 1965).

The Hibakusha movement against nuclear weapons has been related from the very beginning to their effort to make known to the public the truth of the damage caused by the A-bombs, by identifying and expressing their own experiences in words.

From the Bikini Atoll Incident to the World Conference against A and H Bombs

On March 1st, 1954, the United States conducted a hydrogen bomb test at Bikini Atoll in the Marshall Islands. “Ashes of death” were spread across a vast area. The entire 23 crewmembers of Daigo Fukuryu Maru (the Fifth Lucky Dragon), which was

fishing for tuna at the time, were exposed to the radioactive fallout. (It was later discovered that far more fishing vessels had been exposed to the radioactive fallout.) After Hiroshima and Nagasaki, this was the third time Japan had suffered damage from nuclear weapons and it shocked the whole nation. Radioactively contaminated tuna were called “A-bomb tuna”. Four hundred and fifty seven tons of them were disposed of and buried in the ground. On September 23rd, KUBOYAMA Aikichi, the chief radio operator of Daigo Fukuryu Maru, died at the age of forty.

Signature campaigns against hydrogen bomb tests, led by housewives and women, spread quickly. Groups of people from all walks of life, citizens and local governments participated in the campaigns. The National Council for the Signature Campaign against A and H Bombs was formed to count all signatures collected. Then, in response to a proposal from representatives of Hiroshima to convene a world conference “with people’s hands,” on August 6th in 1955, commemorating the tenth anniversary of the atomic bombing, the World Conference against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs was held in Hiroshima. The conference announced that the total number of signatures collected by then was 32,160,709.

Among the speakers on the first day were TAKAHASHI Akihiro, an A-bomb survivor in Hiroshima, YAMAGUCHI Misako, an A-bomb survivor in Nagasaki, who walked up to the podium with TSUJI Yukie of Nagasaki, and Kuboyama Suzu, the wife of late Kuboyama Aikichi, the victim of the hydrogen bomb test at Bikini Atoll.

“For the last ten years since that day, I have had to bear suffering day after day. Could you understand my suffering? If only it had not been for the war, not for the atomic bomb, I would not have suffered this misery. I did not know whom I should tell of this suffering. I do not remember how many times I wanted to die. But if we died, who would tell the world about our suffering? You all here with me, please... do not allow such agonies to be ever repeated.” (Yamaguchi Misako)

It was the first time for the Hibakusha to speak in public and for the audience to hear the story. Tears, anger, and sympathy welled up within all the participants.

Founding an organization led by A-bomb survivors themselves

After the World Conference, a movement to “Invite Hibakusha” to listen to their experiences and hear reports on the Conference started in various regions around the country. This led to a movement to seek out A-bomb survivors in their communities and for A-bomb survivors to form organizations of their own. A-bomb survivors associations were formed one after another, first in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, then in

Okayama, Gunma, Ehime, Nagano and so on. On March 20th, 1956, A-bomb sufferers visited the Diet for the first time to petition Prime Minister HATOYAMA Ichiro, the Speakers of both Houses, Diet members and related ministries calling for the relief of atomic bomb victims and for the end of hydrogen bomb tests.

FUJII Heiichi, who would soon become the first secretary general of Nihon Hidankyo, had an idea for a national organization of the survivors themselves, as follows: “A-bomb survivors engage themselves in the movement all the time and throughout their life”; “Following the World Conference, we are going to organize a sufferers’ organization, explaining it as one that will run the campaign against A and H Bombs all through the year”; “A-bomb survivors will be the main actors to demand and protect their rights. We are going to form an organization for doing this, placing it in the center and ensuring that all others support it. Otherwise it would not become a self-supporting movement.” (*Madoute Kure (Indemnify)*, the supplementary edition of the February 1982 issue of *Newsletter of Data and Research*, Division of Radiation Information Registry, Research Institute for Radiation Biology and Medicine, Hiroshima University)

The original plan was intended to form (1) an organization to achieve compensation for the atomic bomb damage; (2) organizations all across the country, including Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and (3) a nationwide organization rallying those local ones, and further to bring together (4) sufferers of the testing at Bikini Atoll, A-bomb victims living outside Japan, and sufferers of nuclear tests.

Founding of Japan Confederation of A-and H-Bomb Sufferers Organizations (Nihon Hidankyo)

On August 10th, 1956, during the period of the Second World Conference against A and H Bombs in Nagasaki, about 800 Hibakusha from around the country gathered at the Nagasaki International Cultural Hall and founded the Japan Confederation of A-and H-Bomb Sufferers Organizations (Nihon Hidankyo). It marked the birth of the nationwide organization for A and H bomb sufferers.

Hung over the stage were banners reading “Promotion of the movement against A and H bombs,” “State compensation for A and H bomb victims,” “Medical treatment and recuperative care for Hibakusha,” and “Life compensation for the bereaved families.”

The founding meeting issued a declaration entitled “*Message to the World*” and adopted a statute, which read, “the A and H bomb sufferers shall solve medical care,

livelihood and other problems by uniting and helping each other and cooperating with many other people. Further, we make it our objective to engage in the movement against A and H bombs by speaking out about the damage caused by the A and H bombs … so that the tragedy will not be repeated for a third time.”

Hibakusha were heartily pleased with the foundation of Nihon Hidankyo. Above all, for Hibakusha who left the A-bombed cities and had to bear suffering that they could not talk about even to their own families, it became a source that could make their life worth living. The founding proclamation became a principle that guided the subsequent Hibakusha movements.

*** “Message to the World,” Proclamation at the Founding Meeting of Nihon Hidankyo (excerpt)**

Eleven years after the atomic bombing, we could at last assemble from all over the country for the first time. ……

We have acquired the courage to stand up, thanks to the World Conference of last August. …At this occasion, we would like to express to the people of the world our sincere gratitude and our decision to rise with a firm resolve. …….

At today’s gathering, we have commemorated the dead and talked of the inexpressible sentiments piled up in these long years. …… (but they were) not for consolation or relief for the time being. They had the purpose of setting ourselves up, holding hand in hand, resolutely. We would appeal to the world what we must, would demand the country what we need, arouse ourselves and save ourselves -- these talks provided for the occasion to consider the action we should take.

Thus, we have reassured our will to save humanity from its crisis through the lessons learned from our experiences, while at the same time saving ourselves.

Here, we unite our voices to appeal to the world. Humanity must never again inflict nor suffer the sacrifice and torture we have experienced. ….

2. Demand for A-Bomb Sufferers Aid Law and Enactment of Two A-bomb Related Laws

The Japan Confederation of A-and H-Bomb Sufferers Organizations (hereinafter referred to as Nihon Hidankyo) has continued its campaign since its creation, calling for “Prohibition of A and H Bombs” and “Enactment of the A-Bomb Sufferers Aid Law”. Although its goals were clear, the path for their realization was not self-evident, nor

did it always lay emphasis equally on the above two “pillars”. It can be said that pioneering members of the Hibakusha movement opened up an uncharted path creatively and through many trials.

Hibakusha’s demand for the Aid Law and enactment of the A-Bomb Medical Care Law

The demand for the legislation of an A-Bomb Sufferers Aid Law was based on the principle that the government should compensate for the Hibakusha’s sufferings, since their diseases and poverty were caused by the A-bombs during the last war, not by Hibakusha themselves. The contents referred to the following matters: (1) Government’s full cost coverage of their medical expenses; (2) Health control; (3) Setting up of a medical study and treatment institutions; (4) Payment of condolence money for A-bomb victims and a bereaved family pension; (5) Payment of A-bomb sufferers’ disability pension.

In March 1957, the deteriorating condition of Hibakusha’s health, a mounting nationwide campaign against A and H Bombs, and the founding of Nihon Hidankyo led the government to enact the A-Bomb Sufferers’ Medical Care Law. That was in March 1957. For the first time in 12 years since the A-bomb was dropped, a law to care for Hibakusha came into being. The law defined the Hibakusha as those who fall under the categories of either “directly affected,” “entering the city afterward,” “engaged in rescuing/nursing sufferers,” or “exposed in utero,” and who were issued with an Atomic Bomb Survivor’s Certificate. The law stipulates the provision of twice yearly health examinations and a medical expense benefit for injuries or diseases recognized by the State as due to the bomb’s injurious effects (so-called A-bomb diseases). But the A-bomb victims who died, bereaved families, “A-bomb orphans,” and those who suffered the A-bombing at medium to long distant places were not covered by this law, which only focused on “special health conditions” caused by A-bomb radiation.

*** A-bomb sufferers and Hibakusha**

“A-Bomb sufferers” include, other than the legally defined “Hibakusha” (those who are given the Atomic Bomb Survivor’s Certificate), the deceased, their bereaved families, and their children and grand-children. After the enactment of the A-Bomb Medical Care Law, however, only surviving victims are generally called “Hibakusha”.

Difficulties of Hibakusha's activities and Tokyo District Court's verdict on A-Bomb Trial

The path in pursuit of the prohibition of A and H bombs has not been smooth.

In the 1960s, when the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union intensified, various difficulties arose in the ban A and H bomb movement, which had thus far developed nationwide. The 9th World Conference against A and H Bombs was thrown into confusion over the argument on how to evaluate the Soviet Union's resumption of nuclear testing in 1961 and the Partial Nuclear Test Ban Treaty signed in 1963. The representatives of the Japan Socialist Party (JSP) and the General Council of Trade Unions of Japan (Sohyo) withdrew from the conference, and the ban A and H bomb movement thus split. (JSP and Sohyo broke away from the Japan Council against A and H Bombs/Gensuikyo and later formed the Japan Congress Against A- and H-Bombs/Gensuikin.) For Nihon Hidankyo, which did not have adequate organizational, financial and human resources, this chaotic situation was a big ordeal.

At that time, they saw a "ray of light". It was a verdict delivered at the "A-Bomb Trial" in 1963. In 1955, five Hibakusha as plaintiffs filed a lawsuit at the Tokyo District Court to press charges of U.S. responsibility for the A-bombings and to demand compensation from the Japanese Government, which had abandoned its right to claim against the United States for compensation for damages.

The ruling dismissed the appeal of the plaintiffs, but mentioned clearly in the reason for the judgment that the use of atomic bombs against a defenseless city like Hiroshima was a conduct of hostilities, which violated international law in the light of positive international law, such as the Convention Respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land and the draft regulations regarding aerial fighting (rules concerning the Control of Wireless Telegraphy in Time of War and Air Warfare, drafted by a Commission of Jurists at The Hague, December 1922 - February 1923).

Further, it ruled that "for the State that led people to death, injuries and uneasy life by a war which it started on its own authority and responsibility, there inevitably arises the problem of State compensation on the basis of responsibility for the outcome." It thus affirmed that the A-Bomb Medical Care Law as it stood then was far short of adequate relief of Hibakusha and that, needless to say, the State should take sufficient measures. On this basis, it pointed out that since this responsibility was not within the purview of the Court, measures should be taken by the Diet, the legislative body, as well as by the Cabinet, the administrative body. It then concluded by saying that "whenever we revisit the case, we can't help but lament the poverty of politics," thus strongly pressing the political responsibility.

In response to the ruling, both Houses resolved to strengthen “relief measures for A-bomb sufferers,” and the ruling Liberal Democratic Party established an intra-party subcommittee on Hibakusha problems. Momentum for enacting a Hibakusha aid law grew, but dysfunctional as it was then, Hidankyo missed the good opportunity.

From publishing *Tsuru (Crane) Pamphlet* to the enactment of A-Bomb Special Measures Law

While prefectural organizations and individual members were free to participate in any group according to their local conditions, Nihon Hidankyo decided to stay out of any campaign organizations against A and H bombs at the national level, and commit itself to guarding its own organizational unity. The publication in 1966 of the pamphlet entitled *Specific Character of the A-bomb Damage and the Demand for “Hibakusha Aid Law”* became an opportunity for it to unite around the demand for the Hibakusha aid law and unfold campaigns independently. (The pamphlet used to be called *Tsuru pamphlet* as the front cover featured a red paper crane.)

The *Tsuru pamphlet* analyzed that the Hibakusha were thrown in the “vicious cycle of A-bomb diseases and poverty” by the three factors of radiation disorders, breakdown of family life, and loss of house, property and workplace combined. It called on the State to enact an “A-bomb sufferers aid law which would compensate for A-bomb damage, provide medical services and guarantee livelihood thoroughly and comprehensively”.

With this as their strength, a lot of Hibakusha seeking the realization of an aid law converged in Tokyo to petition the Diet and lobby the government and the ruling party. In order to gain nationwide support of the people, Hidankyo created a variety of methods. In a nationwide pilgrimage campaign organized for the first time, they held rallies and roundtable meetings as many as 340 times in 35 prefectures, and they received support signatures from 1,121 mayors and speakers of local assemblies.

In May 1968, the Law Concerning Special Measures for A-Bomb Sufferers (A-Bomb Special Measures Law) was enacted. The law stipulates a system to allocate various allowances for the sufferers, taking account of their requests for living support. But it limited the allowance according to their incomes. The measures for Hibakusha (“two A-bomb laws” -- A-Bomb Medical Care Law and A-Bomb Special Measures Law) were established as part of the social security system focusing on the “exceptional conditions” of the surviving Hibakusha alone. In addition, in connection with the newly instituted Health Control Allowance, which covered diseases defined by the

Health and Welfare Ministry, recognition of the A-bomb diseases eligible for the “special medical allowance” required strict proof of A-bomb radiation as cause.

*** Social security and State compensation at issue**

Social security is provided by the State in conformity with the actual condition of disease or poverty of Hibakusha according to Article 25 of the Constitution.

State compensation is to be provided by the State that caused the war and resulting damage from the A-bombs for its war responsibility.

Big campaign with “Outline of Hibakusha’s Demands” that moved the government and the Diet

In April 1973, Hidankyo released the “Outline of the Demands for the draft A-Bomb Victims Aid Law,” which unified and streamlined the initial 26 demand items into 14, including medical benefits, Hibakusha pension, bereaved family pension, disability pension, condolence money, funeral expenses, and establishment and improvement of institutions for medical study and treatment of A-bomb related diseases.

On the basis of this Outline, Hidankyo set out a campaign goal to win the “legislation of a Hibakusha aid law by the 30th anniversary of the A-bombing,” and launched many waves of actions to call on the government, ruling Liberal Democrats and opposition parties to support the Outline and to move to enact an aid law containing its demands.

Above all, joined by 3,000 Hibakusha and their supporters from many prefectures, from Hokkaido to Okinawa, the November Campaign was conducted for five days and went down in the history of the Hibakusha movement. As many as 1,000 demonstrators met with lawmakers of all political parties (LDP, JSP, JCP, Komei and DSP) and presented the 320,000 petition signatures to them. Around the date of this action, each of these opposition parties released their own drafts of the bill, taking into account the Outline.

In front of the office building of the Health and Welfare Ministry, Hidankyo put up tents and held a 5-day long sit-in. With this backing, their representatives negotiated with the ministry every day, and on the 4th day, they met Welfare Minister SAITO Kunikichi. Saito said, “We are studying hard to find an intermediate way between an aid law and a social security measure. It should cover livelihood benefit beyond medical coverage… We are appointing the Public Health Department as the contact point with Nihon Hidankyo.” The support network for Hidankyo was expanded, and at

the tents a total of about 700,000 yen worth of donations plus pocket heaters, rice, fruit, rice balls, pork soup and miso soup were gifted by 228 organizations and individuals.

Hibakusha aid bill jointly proposed by all the opposition parties based on Hidankyo's demands

On November 28th, with the fervent effects of the November Campaign lingering, the four opposition parties (JSP, JCP, Komei and DSP) held a meeting of secretary-generals, and agreed on proposing their joint draft of the Hibakusha aid law to the Diet. Deliberation upon deliberation between Hidankyo and the opposition parties continued, and on March 29th, 1974 they submitted a bill for the relief of A-bomb survivors to the Lower House. The bill articulated its aim, stating that it stood “on the basis of the spirit of State compensation”. As a measure dedicated to the A-bomb deceased, condolence money and survivor’s pension were included. Based on the Outline of Hibakusha’s Demands, the opposition parties, who usually had different opinions from one another on many issues, submitted a joint bill for the first time to the Diet. It was an epoch-making development.

The ruling LDP, being afraid of the rising public opinion, did not oppose the bill publicly. But it clung to the stance that Hibakusha aid be offered as a social security measure. It shelved Diet deliberations and voting on the bill, and finally scrapped it.

Since then, the joint aid bill drafted by all the opposition parties, slightly modified each time, was repeatedly submitted to the Diet. But it did not see the “light of day” due to the refusal of the ruling LDP.

3. The 1977 NGO International Symposium – Further Breakthrough for the Hibakusha Movement

The first International Symposium and three surveys

Nihon Hidankyo achieved self-reliance and revitalization of its movement through their campaign for a Hibakusha aid law. And a further breakthrough for Hidankyo came with the international symposium in 1977.

In the late 1970s, the People’s Delegation to Request the United Nations to Ban Nuclear Weapons, which included representatives of Hidankyo, called on the United Nations to investigate the reality of damage caused by the atomic bomb and the

circumstances of the survivors. Thus, the first international symposium focusing on the reality of the atomic bomb damage and on Hibakusha was held in Japan in the summer of 1977 under the auspices of the Special NGO Committee for Disarmament.

A wide range of organizations and individuals, such as Nihon Hidankyo, experts in various fields, citizens and peace groups formed a preparatory committee and began working at a rapid pace. Expert groups from medicine, natural science, social science and other fields prepared working documents to be submitted to the symposium. The preparatory committee conducted three surveys featuring general matters, medical science, and the history of survivors' lives under the theme of "What did the [atomic bomb] do to humanity? What should humanity do about the [atomic bomb]?" It set up promotion committees for surveys in prefectures, and Hidankyo, together with many individuals and organizations, made all-out efforts to carry out the surveys.

The research changed both those interviewing and those interviewed

The survey of some 8,000 Hibakusha by some 4,000 interviewers was said to have "changed both those interviewing and those interviewed in the course of the research". As the researchers interviewed Hibakusha, they saw that the damage caused by the atomic bombs to human bodies was still continuing and spreading, even at the time of the research 32 years after the bombings, and that the damage was not limited to problems of Hibakusha's health and livelihood. The atomic bombs had also left an indelible scar on their hearts and minds for the rest of their lives. The researchers found people struggling to live through so much suffering.

Hibakusha who were interviewed had an occasion to reflect on their own original experiences and what had happened in the post-war era. For the first time, they spoke of the suffering that they had kept to themselves for 32 years, blaming themselves as follows: "I couldn't help people who were crying for help that day"; "I couldn't even give water to those who asked for it"; "We left behind children who were burnt alive under collapsed houses." The survivors came to realize that this was the "hell" created by the atomic bomb and the damage to humanity caused by the extreme conditions (which did not allow people to remain human). Their testimonies, full of pain and suffering, were received with sympathy by the researchers and at the symposium. Thereby the survivors found meaning in living in defiance of the atomic bombs.

The Atomic Bomb and Humanity -- criticism against nuclear weapons from the human standpoint

An international team of scientists and experts from 14 countries, including Nobel Peace Prize laureates, attended the symposium. Discussion was held based on reports, which were drawn up on the basis of reviewed working documents in different fields, as well as interim reports of the surveys of A-bomb survivors.

The international research team saw that “Hibakusha” should be defined not only as “victims of the atomic bombing”, but also as “those who have resisted it”. Hibakusha, who had mainly been the object of relief and aid until then, were perceived with empathy as subjects who had overcome their suffering and resisted the atomic bombs. Thus, “Hibakusha” became an international term.

The symposium was also said to have “put a human face on nuclear disarmament”. Its main theme was “What did the [atomic bomb] do to humanity? What should humanity do about the [atomic bomb]?” The international activities of Hidankyo contributed to putting those ideas into a firm perspective of criticism against nuclear weapons from a human standpoint in the nuclear disarmament movement, which had until then been influenced by the international situation and the interests of nuclear powers.

For Nihon Hidankyo, the symposium was a major step towards playing a dramatic role in the international movement against nuclear weapons, a movement which led to the First Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to Disarmament (SSD-I, 1978) and SSD-II (1982). It was also a major step towards organizing a unified World Conference against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs, led by civil society groups.

***Column: Organizations in prefectures developing, newspaper *Hidankyo* launched, and Hibakusha Counseling Center founded**

Hidankyo’s efforts to wage a campaign for a Hibakusha aid law with the Outline of Hibakusha’s Demands and to hold the international symposium, including research surveys, not only raised awareness among Hibakusha, but also deepened cooperation with various organizations, experts and religious figures. Thus, organizations of Hibakusha and their activities in each prefecture have greatly developed. Hidankyo has also performed other various actions: counseling and caring activities for fellow Hibakusha; efforts to have more people know the reality of the atomic bombing, such as A-bomb exhibitions, publication of survivors’ stories and Hibakusha lectures at schools about their own experiences; requesting

local authorities to take their own measures for the Hibakusha; and erecting memorial monuments as well as holding memorial services.

The Hibakusha Counseling Center, founded by Nihon Hidankyo in 1976, hosted annual workshops with consultation services in eight regions across the country. At the workshops, participants discussed the challenges which their movements were faced with and consulted the staff members about medical care and various programs available to them. In May of that year, Nihon Hidankyo launched a newspaper called "*Hidankyo*," which became a monthly publication from the sixth issue in June 1976 and continues up to the present day. The *Hidankyo* not only links Nihon Hidankyo with Hibakusha living across the country, but also helps Hibakusha to share their activities in different regions and plays a role as a vessel for the Hibakusha movement, linking Hibakusha with one another as well as with the public.

4. "Endurance" Argument of Kihon-kon and the Atomic Bomb Victims' Basic Demand

In the course of the preparations for the International Symposium and the united World Conference against A and H Bombs that followed, solidarity between Nihon Hidankyo and other citizens' groups developed. In 1978, Hidankyo, along with the Japanese Consumers' Co-operative Union (JCCU), Japan SEINENDAN Council, the National Federation of Regional Women's Organizations (Chifuren) and 7 other organizations, launched a liaison body named "Citizens Groups' Forum on the Problems of the A-Bomb Suffering (Shiminkon)". Together they decided to build broad public support for the legislation of a Hibakusha Aid Law by collecting signatures, with a target of 20 million signatures.

On March 30, 1978 the Supreme Court handed down a ruling on the case of Son Jin-doo, a Korean Hibakusha who had smuggled himself into Japan to apply for a Hibakusha Certificate, so that he could be covered under the A-Bomb Medical Care Law. The plaintiff won his case in a decision that carried important meaning.

Although it premised its verdict on the view that the A-Bomb Medical Care Law fell under the realm of social security law, the Supreme Court called attention to the fact that the unique and deep health troubles resulting from the A-bombings "could trace their cause back to the war, which amounted to an act of the State. Furthermore, many Hibakusha were still experiencing more unstable living conditions than other war victims in general". The decision further ruled that the A-Bomb Medical Care Law

“has an aspect by which the State, as the subject of the conduct of war, seeks to rescue such peculiar war victims on its own responsibility, and it is undeniable in this respect that in effect there is a consideration as State compensation underlying this system.”

Kihon-kon’s report rejected State compensation

In the face of the court decision and mounting public opinion accelerated by the signature campaign, Health and Welfare Minister HASHIMOTO Ryutaro was pressed to undertake a review of the Hibakusha policy. In June 1979 he inaugurated the Council on Basic Problems of the Atomic Bombing and Measures for the Survivors (Kihon-kon), composed of 7 experts (chaired by KAYA Seiji), as his private-advisory body and referred the basic idea and modality of the Hibakusha policy to it.

While proceeding with the elaboration of the Outline of Hibakusha’s Demands, Hidankyo petitioned the government and the Diet and twice delivered statements to the sessions of Kihon-kon. The Inquiry Panel on the Hibakusha Aid Law, a sub-division of the Human Rights Commission of the Japan Bar Association (Nichibenren), released a primary “Report on the Hibakusha Aid Law” in which it thoroughly criticized the arguments the government had used as grounds for refusing the enactment of the Hibakusha Aid Law: for example, “Hibakusha, unlike soldiers or civilian employees in the military, had no personal status with the State during the war (Absence of relationship with the State)”; or “If Hibakusha are compensated, the balance with general war victims will be lost (Equilibrium with general war victims).” Nichibenren’s report thus called for new legislation based on the concept of State compensation.

However, on December 11, 1980, Kihon-kon submitted the *Report on the Basic Idea and Whole Concept of the Hibakusha Policy* to the then Minister of Health SONODA Sunao. The report utterly betrayed the desire of the Hibakusha.

The report admitted, for example, that the A-bomb “caused the emergence of an unimaginable scene, like hell,” yet it rejected the provision of State compensation for the damage caused by the A-bombs, insisting that if distinctive imparity with other war victims arises, a “national consensus” cannot be obtained and “social equity” secured. It even gave an affirmative evaluation to the official measures then in practice, saying it was enough to take adequate and appropriate relief measures in conformity with the “distinctive peculiarity in comparison with general war damage” of actual conditions of radiation damage, according to the “principle of necessity”.

Wretched arguments of affirmation of war and imposed “Endurance” of A-bomb suffering

The ground for the denial of the State compensation was outrageous. Kihon-kon's report said:

“In general, under the emergency where the survival of the State is at stake, as is the case of war, even if people are forced to undergo sacrifices of war in their lives, bodies or properties, all the people have to equally endure them as the ‘general sacrifice’ of war waged by the whole nation. ··· Hence there is no choice but to conclude that the way to holding the State judicially accountable and seeking a legal remedy is not open.”

What they were saying was that people should exercise patience and forgive the cruel deaths that occurred in the midst of “A-bomb hell” and forgive the lives burdened with anxieties and agonies peculiar to the Hibakusha, not to mention other general war damage. Furthermore, their use of the term “in general (*oyoso*)” here meant that it is a general principle allowing for no exception. They were saying that people must keep patience not only for the past damage caused by the A-bombs, but also for the same horrible damage if it happens now or in the future, because it is due to the “war waged by the whole nation.”

On the same day, Nihon Hidankyo published a “statement” and a “viewpoint” to protest against this report, pointing out that it contained not the slightest bit of “criticism against A-bombs” or even a “reflection on the war responsibility of the State”.

If such a report goes unchallenged, the same outrage will be repeated. Hibakusha expressed their strong indignation against the report, as well as their firm determination to intensify their campaign. In their words: “If we remain inactive in the face of this outrage, the deaths of the many people may end up in vain”; and “Now that we even hear voices in favor of revising the Constitution, the report is lending a helping hand to the acquisition of nuclear weapons by Japan. It is a challenge to our movement and in fact to all people in Japan. It is absolutely unacceptable.”

Anger erupted from peace groups, citizen organizations, academics, intellectuals and many others. Criticism included comments such as: “In affirming war itself, it is equivalent to the thinking of the war regime of the prewar days.” (IENAGA Saburo, historian); “What on earth did the State do to help general war victims? Nothing! That it did nothing means zero, and zero cannot make a factor in equilibrium. They are not qualified to argue about social inequity. It is appalling.” (SAOTOME Katsumoto, writer and survivor of the Tokyo Air Raid)

Overcoming the “Endurance” policy – Campaign policy and theory re-examined

Kihon-kon’s Report made clear that the true barrier hindering the legislation of the Hibakusha Aid Law resided in the government policy that the damage the war caused to the whole nation should be “endured” by its people.

At the beginning of the following year, Nihon Hidankyo launched a nationwide movement to surmount Kihon-kon’s recommendation. What became its main pillar was the campaign to hold “Citizens’ Trials on the Inhumanity of the A-Bombs and the War Responsibility of the State”. These Citizens’ Trials took the form of moot courts in which the points at issue would be unraveled through debates pitching the claims of the Hibakusha side against those of the government, and in which the participants would hand down the judgment. Lawyers helped work up a “model scenario” and, starting with the “model tribunal” in July in Tokyo, the Citizens’ Trials took place at 80 places throughout the country, including Nagasaki, Yamaguchi, Saitama, Aichi, Fukuoka and Hiroshima, and at the Universities of Kanazawa, Tokyo and Hitotsubashi.

In the course of this project, cooperation developed with citizens groups, lawyers and experts in different fields. Hibakusha coming out for the first time testified to their experiences, and the inhumane nature of the damage done by the A-bombs and the injustice of the policy of the government to force “endurance” on Hibakusha were brought into relief.

The desire of the Hibakusha behind their demand for a Hibakusha Aid Law was not merely for relief. They had continued to call for the law as a “law to ensure that no more Hibakusha would be created”. Why? Hidankyo set up a committee to review the Outline of Hibakusha’s Demands, and started discussions to clearly lay down the ground for and significance of the Hibakusha Aid Law which they were demanding.

The responses of bereaved families of the Hibakusha to the Inquiry on the Deceased Hibakusha and their Families (1982) and subsequent discussions based on these responses helped establish a common understanding that the biggest victims of the A-bombs were the deceased and that compensation to the dead Hibakusha should be the core of a State compensation regime to be established. In Hidankyo’s Survey on Hibakusha’s Demands (1983-1984), the people who expressed their desire to “not create any more Hibakusha” -- in such words as “A-bombs never again,” “My experience should not be repeated on any others” -- represented three quarters of all responses, giving a vivid account of what the supreme common desire of all Hibakusha was.

The Hibakusha Aid Law which the Hibakusha have pursued is one in which the Japanese Government admits its own responsibility for the war and atones for the

damage caused by the A-bombings. This means that the State does not impose “endurance” of the damage caused by the A-bombings, that it does not condone the damage but stands to refuse it. This should be a prerequisite for what the government of the A-bombed country should fulfill towards the abolition of nuclear weapons. At the same time, even if the Hibakusha Aid Law is enacted as is demanded by the Hibakusha, nuclear weapons will not disappear on their own. To ensure that no more Hibakusha will ever be created, it is essential to call the U.S. administration to account for the A-bombings and press for the elimination of nuclear weapons.

Atomic Bomb Victims’ Basic Demand finalized

This is how the “No More Hibakusha -- Atomic Bomb Victims’ Basic Demand” (hereinafter shortened to “Basic Demand”) was elaborated as a roadmap to bring into reality the desire of the Hibakusha for “No More Hibakusha”. It contained the two major demands of “No nuclear war and No nuclear weapons” and “Hibakusha Aid Law, now!” It was made as their demand to the U.S. and Japanese governments and, at the same time, as their appeal for understanding and support from broad sectors of the people.

In October 1984, a draft of the Basic Demand was released and Hidankyo called for nationwide discussion. Opinions came in covering more than two hundred items from Hidankyo’s prefectural affiliates and district groups, individual Hibakusha, experts and various others. The number of people who shared their views is estimated to have been several hundreds or even more. Taking into account these opinions, the draft was meticulously refined and finalized. It was adopted by Hidankyo’s national conference of representatives as the Atomic Bomb Victims’ Basic Demand on November 18, 1984.

Among the comments made on the adopted document were: “It was a great honor to be able to take part in the discussion. Now that it is adopted, I want to spread it among a broad range of people, and make it into the common aspiration of us all”; “Beyond the Hibakusha, the document now embodies the demands of all people in Japan,” etc.

Nuclear weapons and humans cannot co-exist -- the weapons of “Absolute Evil”

The preface to the Basic Demand, entitled “What the Atomic Bombing Did,” declared, on the basis of the suffering of the Hibakusha on and after “those days,” that “Atomic bombs are weapons of madness with the sole purpose of extinction,” which

“allow the victims neither to live human lives nor die human deaths”. Hence it called them “weapons of absolute evil”. The Hibakusha cannot accept any reasons as justification for the need of nuclear weapons, whether for “security” or “deterrence against war” or for “retaliation”. It termed them not as inhumane, not as unhumanitarian, but as “anti-human” weapons, carrying the meaning that nuclear weapons and humans cannot coexist in any sense.

The main body of the document, containing the two major demands, enunciated the responsibility of the Japanese and the U.S. governments for having brought about the A-bomb calamities, and put forward demands as follows:

Demands to the U.S. Government: The Basic Demand calls on the U.S. Government “to present a formal apology to the Hibakusha, by acknowledging the fact that the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki was against all humanity and a violation of international law”. It further urges that, as a proof of this acknowledgement, the United States should “abolish all nuclear weapons in its possession, and … take the initiative in the campaign for elimination of all nuclear arms”.

Some suggested laying claim to compensation from the U.S. administration. Yet, if nuclear weapons were kept intact in the arsenal, the compensation money, if paid, would not help resolve any problem. The Basic Demand therefore firmly pointed out that the United States should eliminate their nuclear weapons in compliance with Hibakusha’s desire, “Create no more Hibakusha,” which is the only way that the United States can compensate for this crime, the first such in human history.

Demands to the Japanese Government: To the Japanese Government the Basic Demand put forward the following five items.

- 1) Investigate thoroughly the realities of the damages caused by the atomic bombing, as the only victim nation of nuclear weapons, and make the results public both in Japan and to other countries;
- 2) Legislate the Three Non-Nuclear Principles into law and declare Japan a nuclear weapon-free nation; make all foreign military bases withdraw and stay away from the “nuclear umbrella” provided by any State;
- 3) Take an active part in demanding that all nuclear-armed countries should conclude a Treaty for a Total Ban on Nuclear Weapons without delay;
- 4) Work to establish nuclear weapon-free zones in Asia and the Pacific region;
- 5) Enact a Hibakusha Aid Law at once based on the principle of State compensation, with the aim of creating no more Hibakusha.

Japan's demand on North Korea to desist from developing nuclear weapons, while Japan itself relies on the U.S. "nuclear umbrella" (nuclear deterrence or nuclear blackmail), is not persuasive at all. If Japan insists that the U.S. "nuclear deterrence" is effective for Japan's security, it cannot criticize North Korea, which is targeted by nuclear attacks from U.S. bases situated in its neighbors South Korea and Japan, for its possession of nuclear weapons for the purpose of its own "self-defense."

The secret agreements concluded between the Japanese and U.S. governments allow the United States to bring nuclear weapons to its bases in Okinawa or mainland Japan whenever necessary. Hibakusha cannot accept that nuclear weapons are brought into Japan and that Japan is turned into a nuclear base, or that Japan itself turns into a target of nuclear attack. "No More Hibakusha" means that they refuse to again become either victims or perpetrators.

Hibakusha Aid Law should mean State compensation for the A-bomb suffering

In terms of the responsibility of the State to enact a Hibakusha Aid Law, one of the Hibakusha's two major demands, the Basic Demand formulated it as follows:

The suffering from the A-bombings could "trace its cause back to the war, which amounted to an act of the State". In as much as the A-bomb damage was the result of war, "it is without question that the State that waged the war should be responsible for providing compensation for the damage done" and "legislation of the Hibakusha Aid Law without delay is the obligation of the Japanese Government."

On this basis, the Basic Demand set out the following four pillars of the Hibakusha Aid Law, which the Hibakusha wanted legislated: 1) It should be a law that provides "State compensation for the damage from the A-bombings" as the responsibility of the State that executed the war; specifically, it should include: 2) Provision of condolence money and survivor pensions to the bereaved families of the A-bomb victims; 3) Provision of healthcare, medical treatment and recuperative care for Hibakusha as the responsibility of the State; and 4) Issuance of an A-bomb pension to all Hibakusha, with additional provision for those handicapped.

Further, in order to ensure that no more Hibakusha will be created, the Basic Demand elucidated the inseparable relationship between the above two major demands as follows:

"If the sacrifices of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were ever to be considered unavoidable, it would lead people to tolerate nuclear war." "Compensation for the damage is the first step against similar damage. The legislation of a Hibakusha Aid

Law, requiring the State to compensate for the atomic bombing damage, will help to ensure that no nuclear war damage must be 'endured', and establish the 'right to reject nuclear war.'”

5. Nuclear Weapons Exist Only to be Abolished -- Hidankyo's Own International Activities

In their efforts to overcome the thinking of Kihon-kon's report, which imposed “endurance” onto their suffering, Hibakusha's anger led the Hidankyo movement to take a great leap both theoretically and in practice. One feature was the invigoration of their international activities.

A surge in the anti-nuclear movement -- Speaking tours across the world

It was towards the end of the 1980s that anti-nuclear movements became vigorous around the world.

At the end of 1979, NATO (the North Atlantic Treaty Organization), a military alliance between the United States and some European countries, decided to deploy new Pershing II intermediate-range nuclear missiles and cruise missiles in Western Europe. This immediately escalated the risk of nuclear war. In response, around the beginning of the 1980s, massive anti-nuclear demonstrations flooded into many cities in Europe: 250,000 people in London, 300,000 in Bonn, a human chain of 220,000 surrounding a base in the United Kingdom and so on. A new term “No Euroshima!” was coined to proclaim that Hiroshima must not be repeated in Europe. The wish of Hibakusha for “No more Hibakusha to be created anywhere in the world” became the common cry throughout the world.

More and more requests came to Hidankyo to send its representatives abroad, and an international department was established in Hidankyo. KONISHI Satoru, director of the international department, Dr. HIDA Shuntaro and other representatives were sent to conferences on disarmament and to many countries almost every year. In August 1982, a 27-member delegation visited both East and West Germany and other countries in Europe to interact with peace groups and appeal to citizens for the abolition of nuclear weapons. Some representatives had an audience with Pope John Paul II at the Vatican. In 1983, Konishi and two other Hibakusha mounted the podium to open a meeting of 500,000 people in Bonn, the then capital of West Germany. In Europe, where a hair-trigger alert crisis was escalating as East and West competed to

deploy new nuclear weapons, the appeal of Hibakusha, as the surviving witnesses of the atomic bombings, was accepted with a sense of urgency as evidence of what would happen to humans if a nuclear war broke out.

We should not forget the tremendous cooperation behind the success, including interpretation during the tours and the prior arrangements for the delegations made by Japanese citizens living abroad in cooperation with grassroots peace movements of the visiting countries.

Delegation to U.N. Special Session on Disarmament

In 1978, thanks to the initiative of the Non-Aligned countries, the first U.N. Special Session on Disarmament (SSD-I) was held at the U.N. Headquarters in New York. Forty members of Hidankyo joined the unified Japanese citizens delegation. They petitioned the U.N. Secretary-General and missions of countries to the United Nations and exchanged friendship with peace activists and citizens of the world. Hidankyo independently appealed to citizens by visiting schools and churches for testimony, conducting street exhibitions of pictures drawn by Hibakusha and collecting signatures from citizens. It also started cooperative relations with Japanese Hibakusha living in the United States.

In 1982, Hidankyo sent a 41-member delegation to the Second U.N. Special Session on Disarmament (SSD-II). They were among the national delegation of more than 1,200 people from Japan. One million demonstrators passed in front of the U.N. Headquarters and headed for Central Park. Hibakusha walked, following the children's peace march, at the front of the whole demonstration, and fervently appealed to citizens.

On June 24th, which was NGO Day, YAMAGUCHI Senji made a speech in the U.N. General Assembly Hall on behalf of the national delegation. Holding up a picture of his face with keloid scars, he shouted, "No More Hiroshima, No More Nagasaki, No More War, No More Hibakusha!" His appeal reached out to every government representative and the hall fell silent. The image of that moment was widely broadcast around the world.

The 40th anniversary of the atomic bombings -- Sending missions to the five nuclear powers

In 1985, 40 years after the atomic bombings, Nihon Hidankyo put energetic efforts into dispatching delegations abroad. It made a plan to make direct appeals to the

leaders of the five nuclear weapon states: the United States, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, France and China. Though face-to-face meetings with the heads of States were not realized, the delegations handed requests to officials representing the governments, and were also actively engaged in speaking tours in many places.

In November, Yamaguchi Senji and Konishi Satoru were sent to Geneva, Switzerland, where the U.S.-Soviet summit meeting was held between President Ronald Regan and General Secretary of the Communist Party Mikhail Gorbachev. While the worldwide media assembled there had a hard time in obtaining interviews, Hidankyo's direct request for a meeting was accepted by both the U.S. and Russian delegations. Yamaguchi and Konishi had a half-hour interview with each and successfully communicated to them both verbally and in writing. High officials close to the leaders of each country greeted them politely and listened to them seriously. In the following talks between the two leaders at Reykjavik, it is said that total abolition of nuclear weapons was discussed. That aim was not realized, but the treaty to abolish intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF) was signed the following year.

At the very core of the appeals that the Hidankyo delegates made at international conferences and through their visits worldwide were the anti-human nature of nuclear weapons, learned through Hibakusha's own experiences and research, as well as their criticism against nuclear weapons from a humanitarian viewpoint. They rejected "nuclear deterrence," which stands on the theory of the "equilibrium of forces" between the States; asserted that nuclear weapons are absolutely evil, that they cannot coexist with humans and that there is no choice but to abolish them; and that what was required was not a freeze or reduction, but elimination of every single nuclear weapon from the earth.

With its multifaceted activities highly evaluated throughout the world, Hidankyo was nominated for the 1985 Nobel Peace Prize by the International Peace Bureau (IPB) and has been nominated again and again since then.

*** Column: Various goods/materials to make true stories widely known**

Various goods and materials played significant roles in Hidankyo's activities to disseminate the truth of the damage and suffering caused by the atomic bombings. Some were delivered by the delegation members; others were sent by post responding to a large number of orders and still others were used in a gift campaign.

*** Photo booklet HIBAKUSHA**

In April 1982, 100,000 copies of the booklet HIBAKUSHA in a trilingual version – Japanese/English/German – was published. Hidankyo delegates to the SSD-II brought the booklets to the United Nations and missions of many member states. They were also widely distributed in Germany, Switzerland, and many other countries. In October, a Japanese/English/French version was published. It was subsequently translated into 10 more languages and used in large numbers. As of 1985, the total number of copies published reached 120,000, in 120 countries. In addition to the above, three more versions, each in three different languages – English/Spanish/Esperanto version, Portuguese/Spanish/English version, and Indonesian/English/Thai version – were published. In total, there are five versions now.

*** Crane badge**

In 1982, Hidankyo's symbol, a paper crane, was produced as a badge. The badges, in five colors – red, blue, yellow, navy blue and green – are popular in Japan and overseas. They were exchanged or distributed in large numbers during speaking tours abroad.

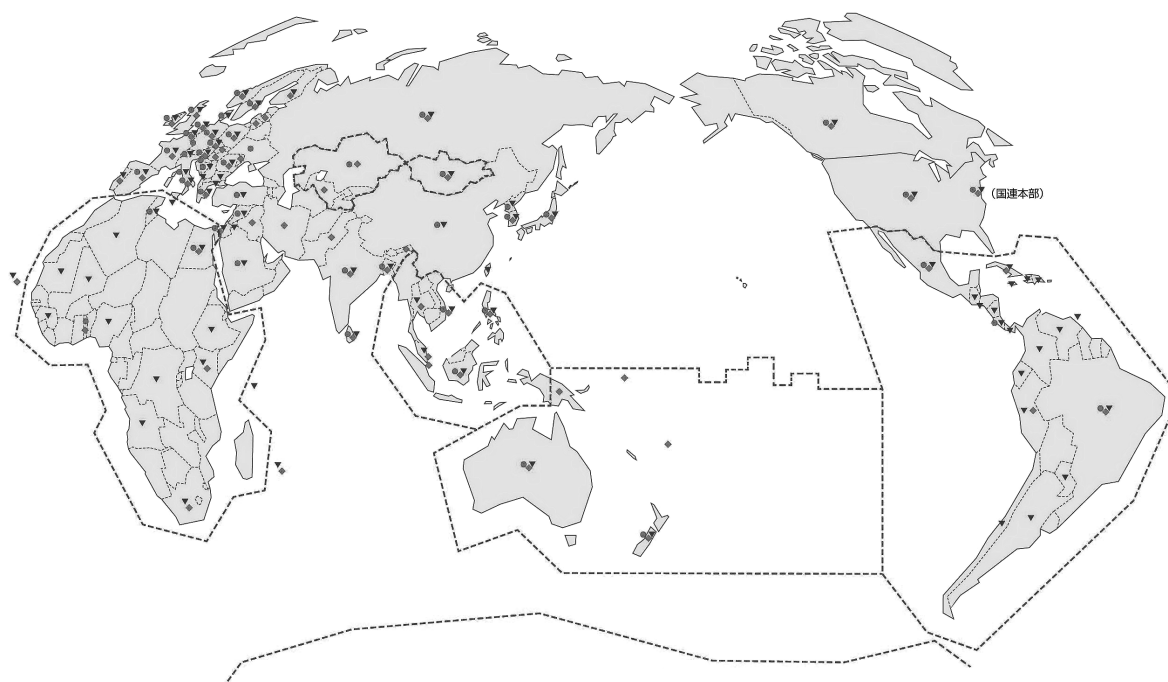
*** The result of the 1985 survey to the world**

The pamphlet Atomic Bomb Victims' Appeal was based on the Survey of the Atomic Bomb Victims conducted by Hidankyo in 1985. It is also called the "1988 Document" and was published in Japanese and English in April 1988. The testimonies collected in the survey were edited into four books: *Witness of Those Two Days (Vol. 1 and 2)* and *Death of Hibakusha (Vol. 1 and 2)*. They were translated by over 100 volunteers who responded to Hidankyo's call. The publication had a foreword by Nobel laureate in literature OE Kenzaburo. They were delivered to the United Nations by Hibakusha and citizens' groups and disseminated in various places they visited overseas.

*** The A-Bomb and Humanity photo panels**

This is a set of 40 large photo panels which was produced and printed by Nihon Hidankyo in 1997. It was translated into various languages with the cooperation of the Japanese Consumers' Co-operative Union and sent around the world through the international co-op movement.

Map: Activities to “disseminate the realities” across the world



- = countries Hibakusha have visited for speaking tours
- ▼ = places where *HIBAKUSHA* booklet was spread
- ◆ = places where The A-Bomb and Humanity panels were spread
- = nuclear-weapon-free zones

6. Nihon Hidankyo and the United Nations

The first U.N. resolution: Hidankyo’s efforts to make the United Nations aware of the reality of damage caused by the atomic bomb

The United Nations was founded in October 1945. In January the following year, it set the elimination of atomic weapons and of all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction, as a top priority goal in its first resolution at its first General Assembly.

However, an endless nuclear arms race began under the Cold War, following the Soviet Union’s successful testing of an atomic bomb in 1949. Humanity has been on

the brink of nuclear war many times, in the Korean War, the Cuban Missile Crisis and the Vietnam War.

In the late 1970s, Hidankyo sent representatives as part of the People's Delegation to Request the United Nations to Ban Nuclear Weapons and the Realization of Various Measures to Ban the Use of Nuclear Weapons, and called on the United Nations to undertake an initiative for investigations and research to clarify the damage caused by the atomic bombings. At a time when neither U.N. Headquarters nor the member states fully grasped the actual damage caused by the atomic bombs, members of the delegation submitted a document containing estimates of casualties and case reports from survivors to the United Nations. The document was entitled *Report to the U.N. Secretary-General: the Damage and Aftereffects from the Atomic Bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and its Aftermath*. They also presented a draft of an international agreement on banning the use of nuclear weapons prepared by legal scientists and others.

An English summary of the 1977 NGO International Symposium was distributed at the NGO Disarmament Conference held in Geneva (February 1978), so the outcome of the symposium became the common property of the peace movement worldwide. Then, the delegation to the SSD-I distributed the English full report of the Symposium published in May 1978 among U.N. officials and government missions to the United Nations for discussion in the SSD-I.

An advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the response of the Japanese government to it

The World Court Movement started in 1992. It was organized by the International Peace Bureau, the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, and the International Association of Lawyers against Nuclear Arms. It aimed at obtaining a judgment about "Whether the use or threat of nuclear weapons is illegal under international law" from the International Court of Justice (ICJ), a principal judicial organ of the United Nations. At the inaugural conference of the campaign in Geneva, Hidankyo representatives condemned nuclear weapons as anti-humanity and appealed to attendees to denounce the atomic bombings as a serious war crime unprecedented in human history. Thus, the World Court Project was launched.

The U.N. General Assembly adopted a resolution to call for an advisory opinion from the ICJ, following the World Health Organization (WHO), as a result of the cooperative efforts of international NGOs and non-aligned countries.

Hidankyo, along with legal experts, established the Japan Center of the World Court Project, and put out a Civilian Statement (April 1994) that clarified the violation of international law in the use and threat of nuclear weapons. It was immediately translated into English and sent to the ICJ and WHO, as well as to U.N. member States, for their preparation for the trial.

Meanwhile, it turned out that the Japanese Government had stated in its written statement to the ICJ that the use of nuclear weapons was not necessarily illegal. Against a backdrop of outrage across the country, Hidankyo and the Japan Center asked the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister to remove the sentence at issue, and had it withdrawn.

In the autumn of 1995, the 50th anniversary of the atomic bombings, the ICJ held hearings in The Hague, the Netherlands to consider the illegality of nuclear weapons. The following year, in July 1996, the ICJ issued an advisory opinion stating that “the threat or use of nuclear weapons would generally be contrary to the rules of international law applicable in armed conflict, and in particular the principles and rules of humanitarian law.” Despite the fact that the judgment included a provision saying, “the Court cannot conclude definitively whether the threat or use of nuclear weapons would be lawful or unlawful in an extreme circumstance of self-defense, in which the very survival of a State would be at stake,” the significance of the advisory opinion is immeasurable. It declared the illegality of nuclear weapons internationally for the first time, and also demonstrated to the world “that there was an obligation to pursue in good faith and to conclude negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects.”

The Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) and Review Conferences

The 1970 Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is a treaty that defined the five nations then possessing nuclear weapons (the United States, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, France and China) as *nuclear-weapon States* and the other nations as *non-nuclear-weapon States*. It was designed to prevent the increase of nuclear-armed States by prohibiting the *nuclear-weapon-States* from transferring nuclear weapons to other nations, and from providing assistance for nuclear technology development, and by forbidding the *non-nuclear-weapon States* from acquiring nuclear weapons.

From the outset the inequality of the treaty has been criticized, and the number of countries possessing nuclear weapons has actually increased to include India,

Pakistan, Israel and North Korea. Nevertheless, the NPT remains very important, because it is the only international treaty at present that all the five *nuclear-weapon-States* have acceded to, which imposes the obligation on each State Party to negotiate on disarmament. Article VI states: “Each of the Parties to the Treaty undertakes to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament.” Focusing on this point, Hidankyo has sent delegations to the Review Conference held at U.N. Headquarters every five years, urging the States Parties to make greater efforts.

At the 2000 Review Conference, the efforts of non-nuclear countries, led by the New Agenda Coalition which aims to achieve nuclear abolition, resulted in a commitment from the nuclear-weapon States, including the United States, to “an unequivocal undertaking... to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals”.

In December 2001, Nihon Hidankyo became registered as a non-governmental organization (NGO) under the U.N. Department of Public Information. Since 2005, it has organized the A-bomb Exhibition in the lobby of U.N. Headquarters during the term of the Review Conferences. Hibakusha took turns to talk each day, and Japanese people living in New York and elsewhere volunteered to help as interpreters.

7. A-bomb Damage is Not “Endurable” -- Calls for State Compensation

Nihon Hidankyo’s own Survey of the Atomic Bomb Victims

In 1985, the year after Nihon Hidankyo formulated the A-Bomb Victims’ Basic Demand, the Ministry of Health and Welfare conducted the first survey on the A-bomb deceased in response to a request from Hidankyo. However, this study only quantitatively identified the number, the time, and the causes of deaths, and did not provide a concrete picture of the nature of the deaths caused by the atomic bombings or the suffering that led to the deaths. The Survey on the Conditions of the Atomic Bomb Victims, which the Ministry has conducted every 10 years since 1965, only examines the “actual conditions” of the Hibakusha’s health, living conditions, hospital visits, receipt of allowances, etc. at the time of the survey, and does not attempt to find out the comprehensive damage of the atomic bombings, including the suffering and anxiety Hibakusha have.

Nihon Hidankyo, in cooperation with experts and with all the organization’s strength, undertook a unique survey of the A-bomb survivors with the aim of “clarifying

the reality of the anti-human suffering that A-bomb survivors have had in their bodies, lives, and minds for the last 40 years, and determining whether their suffering is deemed 'endurable' for human beings".

The questionnaire included 27 questions over 28 pages, and was basically to be filled out by the Hibakusha themselves. Some people refused to take part in the survey saying, "I have been having sleepless nights just reading it. Please allow me to be excused from this survey." But some others said, "It is painful to take a survey in which I have to fill in things I don't want to remember and things I want to keep hidden, but if I don't go this far, the damage caused by the A-bomb will never become clear," or "I filled in the survey thinking it was my will to my daughters." In the end, more than 13,000 responses were collected.

The results of the survey, which analyzed the *physical scars*, *mental scars*, and anxieties of the Hibakusha in relation to their exposure to the atomic bombings, confirmed through statistics and testimonies the cause for the A-bomb Victims' Basic Demand: that the atomic bombs were anti-human weapons that "do not allow people to die as human beings or live as human beings" and that their damage is not something human beings can ever "endure".

Building public opinion for State compensation using the "Three-piece set"

Based on the results of this survey, Nihon Hidankyo launched a major campaign to build public opinion calling for State compensation for the A-bomb damage. The campaign consisted mainly of a "Three-piece set": (1) Collecting signatures for a petition to Diet; (2) Collecting signatures of support and endorsement from Diet members, governors and mayors and municipal assembly chairmen; and (3) Local assembly resolutions to promote a Hibakusha aid law -- all calling for the enactment of a Hibakusha aid law consisting of the four items of State compensation stated in the A-bomb Victims' Basic Demand. A nationwide pilgrimage, starting from Okinawa and Hokkaido and rallying in Tokyo, carried accumulated paper crane flags and signatures of local government leaders from across the country and, along with participating Hibakusha, repeatedly requested Diet members and the national government to enact the law.

In November 1987, 1,000 A-bomb survivors from all over Japan travelled to Tokyo to take part in five days of mass actions. Two thousand Hibakusha and supporters submitted petition signatures at the visiting rooms of members of the House of Representatives and the House of Councilors. They were then joined by 1,500 workers

waiting in Hibiya Park and formed a 3,500-person “human chain carrying paper cranes”, which surrounded the building of the Ministry of Health and Welfare. The chants of “No more nuclear weapons! Enact a Hibakusha aid law providing State compensation!” echoed in the area.

In December 1989, the Atomic Bomb Sufferers Relief Bill submitted by the Socialist Party, Komeito, Communist Party, Rengo, Democratic Socialist Party, and the House of Councilors Club was passed for the first time at a plenary session of the House of Councilors, where the balance between the conservative and progressive forces had been reversed in the wake of the Recruit Scandal and the introduction of a consumption tax. The bill was passed again in 1992, but neither was enacted due to the opposition from the Liberal Democratic Party.

Hibakusha were undeterred, however, and continued to push forward with the Three-piece set campaign. Whenever they came to Tokyo from local areas, they visited the Diet Members’ office building. The Hidankyo branches in the Tokyo metropolitan area visited Diet every month, and Hidankyo branches in each prefecture persistently requested the support of the Diet members in their respective constituencies. Feeling threatened by the growing momentum of the campaign, LDP’s Political Investigation Committee even issued a notification “not to support Hidankyo’s petition drive,” and the then Prime Minister KAIFU Toshiki and six Cabinet ministers, who had signed the petition were asked by the Chief Cabinet Secretary to withdraw their signatures at a Cabinet meeting in December 1989.

The number of petition signatures collected reached 10,020,000. The number of signatures of Diet members exceeded two-thirds of the total in both Houses, including 351 from the House of Representatives and 171 from the House of Councilors. The number of resolutions adopted by local assemblies reached 2,473, representing nearly three-quarters of the total. Public opinion supporting the government enacting a Hibakusha aid law based on its responsibility for the war was growing rapidly. A “national consensus” had indeed been reached.

A-Bomb Survivors Relief Law rejects State compensation

In November 1994, the coalition cabinet of MURAYAMA Tomiichi, consisting of the Liberal Democratic Party, the Socialist Party, and the Sakigake Party, proposed to the Diet a bill for the Law Concerning Relief to Atomic Bomb Survivors. After intense debate, the bill was passed by both Houses of the Diet in December of the same year and promulgated on December 16.

The preamble states the purpose of the law as follows:

“As we approach the 50th anniversary of the atomic bombings, we renew our commitment to the ultimate abolition of nuclear weapons and pray for lasting peace so that the horrors of the atomic bombings will never be repeated. In view of the fact that the damage to health caused by radiation resulting from the atomic bombings is a special kind of damage different from other war damage, this Act is enacted as the responsibility of the national government, to take comprehensive measures for the health, medical care and welfare of the aging atomic bomb survivors, and to commemorate, as a nation, the precious sacrifices made by the atomic bomb deceased.”

“Ultimate” means “the place where things have reached their end point; the ‘limit’,” according to the *Kojien* dictionary. The “ultimate abolition” of nuclear weapons is nothing more than relegating the abolition of nuclear weapons to the far distant future. It is a denial of the Hibakusha’s aspiration for the “immediate abolition” of nuclear weapons.

Furthermore, the “responsibility of the national government” is only mentioned in the last clause referring to the “enactment of this law”. After all, the measures to be taken by the government will be the same as before, limited to the “comprehensive measures for health, medical care, and welfare” for “health damage caused by radiation,” and to “commemorate the precious sacrifices of the deceased”.

This law rejected both the demand for the abolition of nuclear weapons and the enactment of the Hibakusha Aid Law (providing State compensation for the victims of the atomic bombings, including the deceased), as called for in the A-bomb Victims’ Basic Demand formulated by Hidankyo in 1984. During the deliberation process of the bill, Prime Minister Murayama Tomiichi stated, “The current draft is based on the thinking of the Kihon-kon (Council on Basic Problems of the Atomic Bombing and Measures for the Survivors),” while Minister of Health and Welfare IDE Shoichi stated in regard to the sacrifices of life, body and property of the nation in the war, “Basically, we have no choice but for each citizen to individually accept them.”

Hibakusha continue to demand State compensation

On December 23, following the adoption of the A-Bomb Survivors Relief Law, Nihon Hidankyo convened an urgent meeting of national board members.

The members said, “Why didn’t the government accept State compensation? This law reaffirmed the endurance theory of Kihon-kon that war is the responsibility of 100

million people, not the responsibility of the State.” and “Did they include the word ‘responsibility of the national government’ in order to deny ‘State compensation?’”

Although some improvements were made in the law within the framework of the measures for survivors, many people were angered by the enactment of the law that denied State compensation. Heated discussions continued in an attempt to unite more than ever and advance the future movement together with all war victims.

Since then, Hidankyo has continued to call for the “revision” of this law into an aid law providing State compensation. However, due in part to the misleading name of the law, there has been some confusion both within and outside the movement as to whether an “Aid Law” that Hidankyo had long sought has been created, and the movement for State compensation for A-bomb damage has somehow lost steam over the years.

A quarter of a century after the enactment of the law, the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare (MHLW) has publicly stated that it will “pursue scientific and rational grounds based on Kihon-kon’s opinion” for dealing with the victims of the “Black Rain” (the rain containing radioactive fallout that fell after the A-bombing) as well. The policy of “endurance” still lives at the root of the official measures for Hibakusha.

In 1995, the year after the enactment of the A-Bomb Survivors Relief Law, Hidankyo conducted the “50th Year Survey of Atomic Bomb Victims”. In their open-ended answers, the overwhelming majority of respondents expressed criticism and dissatisfaction with the law, citing (1) the lack of perspective of Hibakusha, including the deceased, (2) the lack of State compensation, (3) inadequate treatment of the deceased, and (4) inequality regarding special funeral rites benefits.

In the “What I Want to Leave Behind as a Hibakusha” Survey conducted in 2015, the 70th year of the atomic bombing, when asked whether they could endure the A-bomb damage, 90% of the respondents answered, “No, I cannot endure it.” To the question, “Do you have worries on your mind?” 65% of the respondents answered, “I fear that Japan will go to war again,” 10 percentage points higher than 10 years ago. To the question “What do you want from the Japanese government?” more than three-quarters of the respondents chose “Strict adherence to Article 9 and building a country that does not resort to war” over “nuclear abolition” or the “dissemination of the A-bomb realities”.

YUKIMUNE Hajime (former Co-Chair of Hidankyo) once said, “The atomic

bombing was the first of its kind in the world. So the Hibakusha aid law should be the first law that Japan must consider. It must be a law based on the provisions of the new Constitution and incorporate its new ideals.”

The Hibakusha have stood up to ensure no more Hibakusha will be created and have continued to demand that the government enact a law to compensate for the A-bomb damage. This has been their constant endeavor as sovereign citizens of Japan to ensure that the fundamental human rights, “the rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness,” promised in the Constitution, will never again be sacrificed for the “sake of the State”.

IWASA Mikiso (former Co-Chair of Hidankyo, who passed away in September 2020) was in Hiroshima and could not save his mother, who was trapped under a house and burned to death. Throughout his life, he felt guilty that he was not strong enough to save his mother, and he devoted himself to the Hibakusha movement, saying, “We should never let anyone live like this.”

Until his death, he often told young people, “The government has not seriously fulfilled its responsibility for the war.” “What is compensation? Even if you get money, it doesn’t bring back the dead. Unless the government makes sure that deaths like my mother’s do not happen again, compensation has no value at all.” “State compensation is a promise by the government to the people that it will never wage war again, and no more Hibakusha will be created.”

As a country that claims to be a “country A-bombed in wartime,” the government of Japan must face and atone for the damage caused by the atomic bombings that resulted from the war that Japan itself waged. Only then will its appeal for nuclear abolition be truly persuasive, backed up by its historical responsibility.

*** Column: Movement for improvement of current measures and collective lawsuits for recognition of A-bomb disease**

As measures for the Hibakusha, the government has so far enacted the A-bomb Medical Care Law and the Special Measures Law, and then the current Hibakusha Relief Law that unified these two A-bomb laws. Although not the State compensation system that the Hibakusha have demanded, these measures were achieved because of our efforts and our movement. While focusing on the campaign for the enactment of the Hibakusha aid law, we have also put effort into the campaign for the utilization and improvement of the existing measures. While making maximum use of the existing system for the benefit of Hibakusha,

we have made repeated demands for improvements, and at the same time, we have clarified the limitations of the existing system and linked them to our demands for State compensation. In fact, when the campaign for the Hibakusha aid law gained momentum, the government and ruling party responded by improving the current measures.

The A-bomb Disease Recognition system, under which the Minister of Health, Labor and Welfare certifies that the injuries and illnesses of Hibakusha were caused by the injurious effects of the atomic bombs, is the cornerstone of the current policy. However, the barriers are high, and it has not been easy for Hibakusha to gain recognition of their illnesses as “caused by the atomic bombs”. The requirements for certification are that the Hibakusha’s illness must be attributable to A-bomb radiation (“radiation-induced”) and that the Hibakusha must be currently in need of medical care (“in need of medical care”). In the case of MATSUYA Hideko of Nagasaki, the Supreme Court ruled in 2000 that a “high degree of probability” was sufficient, rather than “natural scientific proof that leaves no doubt” regarding radiation-induced illnesses. But the MHLW has adopted a more stringent screening policy since then.

The Collective Lawsuits for Recognition of A-Bomb Disease, which were first filed in 2003, were initiated to address the limitations of individual lawsuits in changing the government’s measures for the Hibakusha.

Lawsuits were filed in 17 district courts, with 306 plaintiffs from 23 prefectures. The plaintiffs appealed about the reality of the damage caused by the atomic bombings and argued that if Hibakusha suffer injuries or illnesses that require medical treatment, where it cannot be conclusively denied that their injuries or illnesses were caused by radiation, they should be recognized as suffering from atomic bomb sickness, unless there are special grounds for refuting the claim that their conditions were radiation-induced. Many victories were achieved in court rulings. On August 6, 2009, a *Letter of Confirmation Concerning Basic Policy on Termination of Collective Lawsuits for A-bomb Disease Recognition* was exchanged between the then Prime Minister and Liberal Democratic Party President ASO Taro and Nihon Hidankyo, which concluded the collective lawsuits with the agreement to “seek resolution through regular consultations so that there will be no need to fight in court in the future.”

The plaintiffs’ appeals and the passionate struggle of their lawyers and Hibakusha, with the broad support of people in national and regional networks, resulted in a victory that was unprecedented for administrative lawsuits. The number of certified Hibakusha, which had been less than 1% of the total number of Hibakusha Certificate holders, has increased to approximately 7% due to revisions that have been made to the criteria on two occasions.

This lawsuit campaign concerned the recognition under the current law of delayed

radiation sickness. However, the “injurious effects of the atomic bombs” are not limited to radiation, and the burden of proof that the damage was caused by radiation should also be borne by the government. As a result, it has become clear that compensation for the entirety of the A-bomb damage can only be achieved through a State compensation law.

8. Hibakusha Appeal International Signature Campaign -- Road to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

International public opinion focused on the “humanitarian impact” of nuclear weapons

In April 2010, Dr. Jacob Kellenberger, the then President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), issued a statement calling for “bringing the era of nuclear weapons to an end” and stating that the debate about nuclear weapons should be conducted based on the interests of humanity, fundamental rules of international humanitarian law and the collective future of humanity.

At the NPT Review Conference that year, it was agreed that the Conference, including the five nuclear weapon states, “expresses its deep concern at the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons” and the Final Document reaffirmed “the unequivocal undertaking of the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals.”

The experience of the United Nations, small and medium States and civil society in concluding the Convention on the Prohibition of Anti-Personnel Mines (1997) and the Convention on Cluster Munitions (2008) without major powers led to a significant shift in international public opinion towards discussing the abolition of nuclear weapons based on a “humanitarian” perspective. It was felt that the world was beginning to change as a result of the efforts of Nihon Hidankyo, which, since the 1980s, has spoken out in many countries around the world about the anti-human nature of the damage caused by nuclear weapons and has continued to appeal that nuclear weapons cannot coexist with human beings in any sense and that they must be abolished.

This trend was taken up in the joint statement of 16 states on the “humanitarian dimension of nuclear disarmament” at the First Preparatory Committee (2012) for the 2015 NPT Review Conference. The number of endorsing countries then rapidly increased to 125 at the U.N. General Assembly the following year.

In 2013-14, International Conferences on the Humanitarian Impacts of Nuclear

Weapons were held in Oslo, Norway (attended by 127 States), Nayarit, Mexico (146 States) and Vienna, Austria (158 States) hosted by the respective governments and joined by the United Nations, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, governments of the willing, Hibakusha, NGOs and experts (scientists and doctors). A special session on the Hibakusha was held immediately following the opening ceremony on the first day of the second conference in Nayarit, where the then Secretary General of Nihon Hidankyo Tanaka Terumi and Assistant Secretary General FUJIMORI Toshiki of Nihon Hidankyo, as well as Setsuko Thurlow, a Hiroshima Hibakusha living in Canada, gave reports based on their own A-bomb experiences. Their speeches had a great impact on the entire conference. At the third conference in Vienna, from the five nuclear-weapon States, representatives of the United States and the United Kingdom joined the discussion for the first time.

The conclusion of this series of international conferences was as follows: there can be no means of relief if nuclear weapons are once detonated, whether intentionally or accidentally; the use of nuclear weapons cannot, in any sense, be consistent with international humanitarian law; only the elimination of nuclear weapons can guarantee that they are never used; and the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons should be pursued within an agreed legal framework, including a treaty to prohibit nuclear weapons.

The 2015 NPT Review Conference was unable to agree on a final document due to the opposition from the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada. However, an Open-Ended Working Group was convened with the participation of States and civil society groups that supported the initiative of focusing on the inhumanity of nuclear weapons. Based on the recommendation of the group, the U.N. General Assembly adopted a resolution in December 2016 that it should convene a conference to negotiate a “legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination.”

In response to the resolution, the negotiation conference was held on March 27 - 31 and June 15 - July 7, 2017, and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was adopted on July 7.

Hibakusha Appeal International Signature Campaign supports the adoption and ratification of TPNW

The year before, in April 2016, the International Signature Campaign in Support of the Appeal of the Hibakusha, the Atomic Bomb Survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki,

for the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons (Hibakusha Appeal International Signature Campaign) was launched by Nihon Hidankyo with 9 Hibakusha of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bombings (including those living abroad) as the initial proposers.

In this signature campaign, earnestly desiring the elimination of nuclear weapons without delay, the Hibakusha called on all State governments to conclude a treaty to ban and eliminate nuclear weapons. The signature campaign was the first time that Nihon Hidankyo, which marked its 60th anniversary that year, directly called on the people of the world to join the campaign to abolish nuclear weapons, a goal that they had constantly aspired to despite many twists and turns. This became a landmark initiative that contributed significantly to moves towards the adoption and entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

In Japan, the National Promotion Committee of the Hibakusha Appeal International Signature Campaign, comprising 48 national organizations that endorsed the initiative, worked together with 286 local promotion groups across the country to develop the signature campaign, with the aim of collecting hundreds of millions of signatures worldwide by 2020. Collected signatures were submitted to the United Nations every year at several occasions from October 2016. The accumulated total number of signatures collected had reached 12,612,798 at the time of the adoption of the TPNW (the final number of signatures submitted as of the end of December 2020 was 13,702,345). The campaign made a valuable contribution in the adoption of the treaty and its ratification by respective countries, for which U.N. Under-Secretary-General Nakamitsu Izumi expressed her deep gratitude.

From adoption to entry into force of the TPNW

On 27 March 2017, the first day of the negotiation conference of the treaty to prohibit nuclear weapons at the United Nations, none of the nuclear weapon States participated. On the contrary, the representatives of the United States and other nuclear-weapon States and other governments gathered outside the conference hall in the U.N. building to voice their opposition to the ban treaty.

At the conference, which began at the U.N. General Assembly Hall, after Fujimori Toshiki of Nihon Hidankyo and several others had spoken, Ambassador TAKAMIZAWA Nobushige of Japan took the floor and stated that the Japanese Government would not participate in the negotiations, saying, “We must say that it would be difficult for Japan to participate in this conference in a constructive manner and in good faith.” Thereafter, no ambassadors from the government of the A-bombed country attended the conference.

Enthusiastic discussions continued at the conference. In the original draft of the treaty proposed by the Chairperson, Ambassador Elayne Whyte Gómez (Costa Rica), there was no mention of “threat to use nuclear weapons” in Article 1 (Prohibitions). After discussion, the words “use or threaten to use nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices” were included in item (d) of Article 1 (Prohibitions). Thus, the idea of “nuclear deterrence” (nuclear umbrella) was clearly rejected.

On July 7, 2017, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was adopted by 122 countries, representing a clear majority, voting in favor. We had not anticipated such a rapid development when we called for the international signature campaign. Since the formation of Nihon Hidankyo, Hibakusha have never given up and have appealed the inhumanity of nuclear weapons and called for the abolition of nuclear weapons both inside and outside Japan. They welcomed with great joy the adoption of the treaty, which marked a solid step towards the abolition of nuclear weapons.

An origami paper crane was placed on the seat of the Japanese Government delegation. The message on its wings read: “Wish you were here.” Their absence was truly infuriating to the Hibakusha.

Hibakusha clearly stipulated in the treaty

The TPNW consists of a Preamble (24 paragraphs) and 20 Articles.

The Preamble refers to hibakusha in two places. It states that it is “mindful of the unacceptable suffering of and harm caused to the victims of the use of nuclear weapons (hibakusha), as well as of those affected by the testing of nuclear weapons” and includes the phrase “recognizing the efforts to the total elimination of nuclear weapons undertaken by the United Nations, non-governmental organizations and the hibakusha…” It was also reaffirmed that “any use of nuclear weapons would also be abhorrent to the principles of humanity and the dictates of public conscience.”

Article I prohibited the development, testing, production, manufacture, possession or stockpiling of nuclear weapons under any circumstances, as well as “to threaten to use.” Article VI obligates each State party to provide medical, social and economic assistance to those affected by the use or testing of nuclear weapons and the environmental remediation of areas so contaminated.

Nihon Hidankyo’s insistence and efforts proclaiming that the damage caused by nuclear weapons is something that human beings cannot “endure” and its demand that nuclear weapons, which are an absolute evil, be totally banned and eliminated resulted in the realization of this international treaty.

At a press conference following the adoption of the treaty (July 7, 2017), Ambassador Elayne Whyte, who presided over the U.N. negotiation conference of the TPNW, described the treaty as a warm and humane treaty, a combination of “reason and heart,” and said that Hibakusha’s shared experiences “touch the human soul” and that Hibakusha, who had experienced the damage caused by nuclear weapons, were the “driving force” in creating the treaty.

The entry into force of TPNW

The TPNW was to enter into force 90 days after 50 States ratified, accepted, approved, or acceded to it. The number of States that ratified or acceded to the treaty reached 50 on October 24, 2020. Many of them were small and medium-sized States, but they achieved this feat in defiance of US “letters” attempting to block their signature and ratification of the treaty and urging them to withdraw from it, as well as of the opposition from other nuclear-armed States.

Thus, on January 22, 2021, the TPNW entered into force. For the first time in history, an international treaty outlawing nuclear weapons was born and the international community took a step forward towards the abolition of nuclear weapons.

III. Toward a World without Nuclear Weapons and War -- Overcoming the Nuclear Age: The Human Way of Life

Entry into force of the TPNW

On January 22, 2021, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) entered into force. Sixty-five years since we formed Nihon Hidankyo, declaring to “save humanity from its crisis···while at the same time saving ourselves,” we finally stand at the starting point of an international solidarity action that can envisage a world without nuclear weapons.

On October 12, 2020, at the U.N. General Assembly First Committee, Ambassador Cristian Espinosa Canizares, the Permanent Representative of Ecuador (one of the original 50 ratifying countries that brought about the entry into force of the TPNW) made a speech. He said, “The best tribute we as States can pay to the victims of these attacks is to sign and ratify the TPNW. That is why my country deposited the instrument of ratification.”

Nakamitsu Izumi, U.N. Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs said, “The TPNW was concluded in the wake of an increasing focus on the “catastrophic humanitarian consequences” that nuclear weapons can bring, and the seriously deteriorating international environment surrounding nuclear weapons. But more importantly, nuclear disarmament, towards which nuclear weapon States have an obligation under international law (i.e., Article 6 of the NPT stipulates obligation to pursue negotiations for nuclear disarmament in good faith), has not made any progress at all, but is rather going in the opposite direction. Shouldn't we take this situation behind the treaty seriously?” (*Mainichi Shimbun*, January 22, 2021) Also, in a video message sent to Nihon Hidankyo on the day of entry into force, she said, “The entry into force of the TPNW is first and foremost, dedicated to the Hibakusha. The testimonies of the Hibakusha have been the moral driving force behind the treaty. Each one of your experiences of the atomic bombing, which is beyond description, continues to give a human face to the cold-hearted logic of nuclear deterrence.”

Many in the international community welcomed with great joy the entry into force of the TPNW, and even in some NATO member countries and nuclear-armed States, citizens have started movements to urge their own governments to ratify the treaty.

1. Why Does the Government of the “A-bombed Country” Not Sign the TPNW?

The Japanese government, which kept absent from the treaty negotiation conference, expressed its opposition to the treaty as soon as it was concluded, saying that “We won’t ratify it.” Japan is the only country in the world where nuclear weapons were used in war. Along with the Hibakusha of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, many Japanese citizens have continued to call for the abolition of nuclear weapons. Why does Japan not join the TPNW?

It is because the Japanese government has consistently chosen to live under the “nuclear umbrella” of the United States as its ally after the war, without directly facing the damage of the atomic bombing caused by the war that the Japanese government itself waged.

The beginning of “Postwar period” -- Is it true that “the atomic bomb ended the war?”

The bombing of Hiroshima on August 6, 1945 was announced by the Imperial headquarters of Japan at 3:15 p.m. on August 7. The announcement was quite simple. It said that on August 6, Hiroshima City suffered considerable damage by the attack of an enemy aircraft, and it seemed that a new-type bomb was used, but the details were still under investigation. On the bombing of Nagasaki on August 9, the Western Military District Headquarters (as opposed to the Imperial headquarters) announced at 2:45 p.m. on the day that two large enemy aircraft entered Nagasaki City airspace around eleven o’clock and used what seemed to be a new bomb; the damage was expected to be relatively small though details were under investigation. In this way, to the Japanese public, the damage was reported to be only small.

Only one “protest statement” against the United States

The Japanese Government did protest, just once, against the United States about the A-bombing of Hiroshima. The only protest was issued on August 10, 1945, four days after the A-bombing of Hiroshima, as *Protest against the Attack of a New-Type Bomb by an American Airplane*. It said, “(The use of the) ‘new-type bomb’ by the United States killed indiscriminately by bomb-shell blast and radiant heat without distinction of combatant or non-combatant or of age or sex.” “The damaged sphere is

general and immense, and judging from the individual state of injury, the bomb in this case should be said to be the most cruel one that ever existed” and “exceeds by far the indiscriminate and cruel character of efficiency, the poison and other weapons the use of which has been prohibited hitherto because of such an efficiency.” And it stated, “Disregarding a fundamental principle of international law and humanity···This is a new offence against the civilization of mankind” and strongly “impeaches the Government of the United States···and demands strongly that the Government of the United States give up the use of such an inhumane weapon instantly.” (However, the bombing of Nagasaki was not mentioned at all.)

The protest was sent to the U.S. Government via the Swiss Government at 1:00 a.m. on August 10, in the midst of the *Gozen Kaigi* convened in response to the Soviet Union’s entry into the war on the 9th. The *Gozen Kaigi* decided to accept the Potsdam Declaration (Japan’s surrender) at 2:20 a.m., and sent out the “Acceptance of the Declaration” at 7:15 a.m. In other words, the protest was a last-minute rush just before the surrender.

U.S. and Japanese governments offset each other’s responsibility with the theory “the A-bomb ended the war”

On August 12, Navy Minister YONAI Mitsumasa said, “The dropping of the atomic bombs and the Soviet Union’s entry into the war against Japan were, in a sense, the grace of Heaven.” The reason for the defeat was that Japan had fallen into a situation where it was unable to continue the war, but Yonai said, “It is rather fortunate that we can close the war without showing such domestic situation out on the surface.” (*Memorandum of the Navy Admiral Yonai Mitsumasa, 1988*, copied by TAKAGI Sokichi, edited by SANEMATSU Yuzuru)

On August 15, Emperor Showa’s “Imperial Rescript on the End of the War” (broadcast as *Gyokuon-hoso*) stated, “The enemy has begun to employ a new and most cruel bomb, the power of which to do damage is incalculable, taking a toll on many innocent lives,” and if Japan were to continue to engage in the war, it would invite “an ultimate collapse and obliteration of the Japanese nation” and “the total extinction of human civilization”, thus citing the disaster of the atomic bombs as a reason for accepting the Potsdam Declaration.

A month after the end of the war, Prime Minister Prince HIGASHIKUNI Naruhiko called on the United States at the beginning of his response to the Associated Press’s written questions, “People of America, won’t you forget Pearl Harbor? We

Japanese people will forget the picture of devastation wrought by the atomic bomb...”, and said that now that the war was over, both sides should leave the hatred behind.

By pretending that the war had ended with the A-bomb, Japan could hide its domestic situation, where it was unable to continue the war. On the other hand, the United States was able to justify the A-bombing by saying that the bomb had saved the lives of its soldiers and threaten other nations as the first country in the world to possess nuclear weapons... a convenient rationale for both the U.S. and Japanese governments.

In this way, the two governments have continued to strengthen the nuclear military alliance that condones the atomic bombing, offsetting both Japan’s responsibility for the war and the responsibility of the United States for the atomic bombings, through the theory that “the A-bomb ended the war.”

Japan under the “nuclear umbrella”

The Japanese Government’s policy of accepting atomic bombs, which rendered the A-bombing “the grace of Heaven” and used it as an excuse to end the war, carried on even after the war. The policy has continued to support U.S. nuclear policy under the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty concluded at the same time as the San Francisco Peace Treaty, which approved Japan’s independence.

In 1968, in his reply to a question in the Diet debate over the return of the administrative right of Okinawa from the United States, then Prime Minister SATO Eisaku declared to commit to the Three Non-nuclear Principles of “not manufacturing, possessing, nor allowing the bringing-in” of nuclear weapons, which has been described as a “national policy”. However, there was an “unspoken understanding” between the United States and Japan (reached in 1960) that no prior consultation would be held on the port-calls of nuclear ships and a “secret agreement” accepting the entry and transit of nuclear weapons in the event of an emergency (1969). It is now clear that the principle of “not allowing the bringing-in” of these weapons was just in words and actually not observed at all.

The Japanese government also reversed its claim that “the atomic bomb violated international law” in the protest just before its defeat. In responding to repeated questions from opposition parties about the illegality of nuclear weapons, the government said that it could not deem nuclear weapons illegal, given that there was no positive law prohibiting nuclear weapons. Far from making any efforts to establish

such positive law, the government of Japan has put off the abolition of nuclear weapons as an “ultimate” goal, and deepened its dependence on the U.S. “nuclear umbrella” (extended nuclear deterrence) in Japan’s security policy.

It was even reported that Abe Shinzo, then Prime Minister of Japan, opposed the declaration of no-first-use of nuclear weapons, originally planned by the Obama administration in its early days following its inauguration in 2009, and that Abe’s opposition was behind the withdrawal of the declaration (Washington Post, August 15, 2016). This has not changed even after the TPNW’s entry into force.

- Japan should make sincere efforts to eliminate nuclear weapons in Northeast Asia and around the world by leaving the U.S. “nuclear umbrella” and ratifying the TPNW. That should be the way for Japan to gain trust and respect from other countries. (Nagasaki, in utero at time of bombing, Male, Chiba Prefecture)

- People were sacrificed in the world’s first experiment with A-bombs and abruptly lost their lives. My mother was also killed in the direct explosion. Naturally, A-bomb survivors expected that Japan, as the A-bombed country, would be the first to sign the TPNW. After all, the Japanese Government has been just a subordinate of the United States. (Hiroshima, 2 km from ground zero, Female, 11 years old, Hyogo Prefecture)

- It is a crime against the whole world that our government refuses to sign or ratify this treaty, when it should be appealing to the world about the illegality of nuclear weapons themselves. (Hiroshima, 2km from ground zero, Male, 2 years old, Hyogo Prefecture)

(From Hidankyo’s questionnaire “*Aiming to Achieve a World Free of Nuclear Weapons and War,*” conducted in September 2019)

The “nuclear umbrella” is a nuclear threat and cannot protect peace

The Japanese Government maintains that Japan is protected by the U.S. “nuclear umbrella”. “Nuclear deterrence” theory argues that nuclear weapons would deter the outbreak of nuclear war. It does not regard nuclear weapons as absolute evil but accepts their existence, and insists on protecting the security of one country by continuing to threaten other countries with nuclear weapons.

Nuclear powers have continued to possess these arms and uphold the “nuclear deterrence” theory, which their allies have embraced. As a result, the number of nuclear-armed States has increased to nine, from the United States being the only nuclear-armed State when it dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and

the total number of warheads has exceeded 130,000. Although without explosions, experiments aiming to maintain the performance of nuclear weapons continue, keeping them ready to be used at any time. It is clear that “nuclear buildup,” not “nuclear deterrence,” has made progress.

- Because you have not taken your responsibility of being the only victim nation of the atomic bombing to work for the abolition of nuclear weapons, such nuclear proliferation has happened as now seen all over the world. ···If the world goes on competing for such proliferation of nuclear armament, it will deprive us of our own future. Let the world bear this fact in mind. We should work toward a nuclear-free world. (Nagasaki, entered the city after the bombing, Female, 4 years old, Ibaraki Prefecture)

- Do You really believe that our country is secure as long as we are under the U.S. nuclear umbrella? I want you to show us the future vision of our country. There is no need to be one of the super-powers, and there is no need for military forces. The only way for us to receive respect from the rest of the world is to contribute to world peace on the basis of our pacifist constitution. This came out of my personal experiences of having travelled around countless cities in the world and having met citizens over there. (Hiroshima, 1.5km, Female, 14 years old, Tokyo)

(Messages from Hibakusha: For the 2010 NPT Review Conference)

*** Column: Costa Rica, a “Country without an Army”**

Costa Rica, the country of Ambassador Elayne Whyte Gómez who presented the draft Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) in the negotiation conference and presided over it, is famous as a “country without an army”. To this day, Hibakusha, lawyers and other citizens from Japan have cultivated personal exchanges with Costa Ricans many times.

How has Costa Rica been able to maintain peace in conflict-prone Central and South America? To this question, lawyer Carlos Vargas (who passed away in 2012) replied, “We became strong because we abandoned our army”; meaning because they abandoned their army, the small country can negotiate with the United States, a great power, on an equal footing.

Costa Rica abolished its standing army. Constitutionally, it is still possible for it to have an army whenever it deems necessary. Yet, it respects above all human lives and *human rights* and practices *democracy* thoroughly so that neighboring countries would not fear

that a dictatorship could be reestablished in Costa Rica and that it may rebuild its army. Because the country has emphasized *education* to bring these values to the people, created an *election system* that fairly reflects the will of the people, and endeavored to solve problems through peaceful and friendly dialogue rather than confrontation with its neighbors and other countries, it has no worries about being attacked from the outside. The foundation of all this is that it has no army. Once you abolish it, you no longer have to be frightened of it.

Japan, a country that refuses to face its own responsibility for the war

There is one more reason why the Japanese Government opposes the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. It is because Japan, despite frequently identifying as the only A-bombed country in war, would not face the fact that the atomic bombs exerted “immeasurable agonies and damage” to humans and that these damage and sufferings were brought about by the war waged by its own State.

The government has, up to now, consistently rejected State compensation for the atomic bomb damage. As has been already described, the reason is based on the policy that all people should “endure” the damage caused by the “war of national mobilization”. Forcing endurance on people without compensating for damage means to refuse both the Hibakusha’s appeal that the damage done by atomic bombs cannot be endured by humans, and the recognition of the damage formulated by the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. It is nothing other than an acceptance of the existence of nuclear weapons.

“Endurance” policy remaining in place since the prewar era

Looking back at history, the government’s policy to make people “endure” the sacrifices for war has not changed from the prewar days. Regarding the Wartime Disaster Protection Act (repealed after the war) enacted in 1942, TAKAHASHI Toshio, who was a government official involved in the enactment said as below:

“It is only natural from our country’s circumstances as a ‘family State’ that all the people must engage in defending the State in times of war, and it must be people’s responsibility. Therefore, even if the people should suffer from human and physical damage due to wartime disasters, it is, by nature, not to be demanded of the State to provide damage compensation, nor should such compensations be expected” (*Welfare Issues*, April 1942 edition, Social Work Research Institute).

This act’s system to “rescue, support, and pay allowances to the bereaved families”

was for “removing anxieties of life, ensuring to stabilize the people’s mind, proactively making home front activities even more active, and thus perfect national defense.” In other words, it aimed to pursue war objectives.

After the war, the Japanese government enforced the Act on Relief of War Victims and Survivors immediately after the occupation was over, and restored the Public Officers Pension Act. The government distinguished soldiers/army civilian employees from civilians and have so far compensated the former as much as 60 trillion yen by this Relief Act, saying that soldiers/army civilian employees and battle collaborators had contractual status with the State.

In Germany and Italy, which are also defeated countries, the damages caused by the Allied Forces’ air raids were compensated according to the damage, without discrimination between the military and the civilian. “It is the basis of democracy that the State should face the damages caused to individuals”, and “it is the promise between the State and its citizens to compensate the individuals who have suffered damage from wars waged by the State.” (*NHK Special - Forgotten Postwar Compensation* broadcast on August 15, 2020.)

The Japanese Government has, since the end of World War II, been acceptive of nuclear weapons, not compensated at all for the damages to general citizens caused by the war that the State waged, and forced Hibakusha to endure the A-bomb damage that cannot be endured by humans. It has done so even under the Constitution of Japan, which denies “war as a sovereign right of the nation”.

U.S. military bases still exist all over Japan. If the United States were to start a war, the bases from which U.S. troops would be dispatched and missiles launched would become bases for nuclear attacks and in turn become targets for attack. Okinawa, in particular, where the largest number of bases are located, would be in awful danger.

In July 2014, a Cabinet decision was made to allow the exercise of the right to collective self-defense, by changing the interpretation of the Constitution. Then, the security legislation (the so-called War Acts), which would allow the dispatching of Self Defense Forces overseas, was railroaded in September 2015 and came into effect in March 2016. This is an act of the State in violation of Article 9 of the Constitution, and it is an act of war preparation. This is the same as telling us to “endure” such developments.

In such a country that makes its way into the “prewar era” without ending the “postwar era”, the policy of “endurance” will continue from past wars into future wars.

2. The Responsibility of the Government of Japan, the A-bombed Country, and of Us

If Japan changes, the world will change

Given that the Japanese Government sees Japan as “the only A-bombed country in war”, it should be putting itself in Hibakusha’s shoes and taking the lead in promoting the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. However, it hasn’t participated in the conference discussing the treaty, and instead of signing and ratifying the adopted treaty, it has declared opposition to the treaty, saying, “Our participation would undermine the legitimacy of the United States’ nuclear deterrence.” This position of the nuclear victim country, which advocates the *legitimacy* of nuclear weapons, betrays the Hibakusha and the people of the world who desire a world without nuclear weapons.

The Japanese government has insisted, “We will serve as a bridge-builder between nuclear and non-nuclear States.” If it wishes to act as a “bridge-builder”, it should not close the door on the TPNW, which many non-nuclear weapon States endorse.

At present, more than 70 percent of Japanese people think that “Japan should participate in the TPNW.” If Japan joins the treaty by accepting the people’s voices, the world will change a great deal toward the abolition of nuclear weapons. It is our historical and international responsibility to press the Japanese Government to sign and ratify the treaty, and make it fulfill its responsibility.

Nihon Hidankyo has demanded of the government that “it should break away from the policy of nuclear deterrence and take the lead in abolishing nuclear weapons.” Now that the TPNW entered into force, we have started the “Signature campaign to call on the Japanese Government to sign and ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.”

As humans living in the nuclear age

The United States has continued to possess nuclear weapons and the Japanese Government, under the “nuclear umbrella”, has maintained the “endurance” policy. The Hibakusha’s movement has challenged to change this post-war structure, which the two countries interdependently produced. We deny war, value people’s lives above all else, and seek a world where genuine peace is enjoyed without depending on nuclear weapons or military strength.

There have been no further victims of nuclear weapons used in actual warfare since Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Hibakusha's desire to make "Nagasaki the last atomic-bombed site" has so far been fulfilled. However, we cannot feel assured as long as nuclear weapons exist in this world.

Now the average age of Hibakusha is over 84 and there will be no Hibakusha in the not-so-distant future. State compensation for the A-bomb damage and the fulfillment of the desire to abolish nuclear weapons are absolutely necessary for the next generation to live in peace. We cannot die until we see a path to the realization of these goals.

- The government should apologize for its responsibility for the war and decide on the State compensation promptly. The truth of the damage wrought by the atomic bombs should be conveyed to the people all over the world. Nuclear weapons and humans cannot coexist. If nuclear war occurs, the earth will perish. We aspire that, as soon as possible, the day will come when we can report to the A-bomb victims in front of their gravestones that nuclear weapons are finally abolished. (Hiroshima, entered the city after the bombing, Male, 7 years old, Kanagawa Prefecture)

- Cruelties of the atomic bombing never disappeared but was engraved in my mind...we should never repeat the war. What do we fight for? What was the person's state of mind like who dropped the atomic bomb? It burned women and children to death. I am scared of the human mind beyond anger. Although I survived, I should have died. Left behind, I had hard times. I desire a peaceful world. I pray for peace without war. (Nagasaki, 1.9km, Female, 18 years old, Fukuoka Prefecture)

(Survey "What I Want to Leave Behind as a Hibakusha -- having lived for 70 years since the A-bombing", 2015)

Connecting with young people

In 2016, the Hibakusha Appeal International Signature Campaign for the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons was launched by the Hibakusha. This led to wide cooperation with citizens and the National Promotion Committee of the Hibakusha Appeal International Signature Campaign was formed. We have connected with young people through concert venues ("live houses") or online events.

Moreover, in the course of activities of the "No More Hibakusha Project - Inheriting

Memories of the A-and H-bomb Sufferers” founded in 2011, efforts to learn from the Hibakusha movement and widely disseminate what was learnt have been made at some universities.

Intensive reading of the Hidankyo surveys (50th and 70th year of the atomic bombings): Researchers and graduate students analyzed the free descriptive answers of the “50th Year Survey of Atomic Bomb Victims” conducted in 1995 (the year following the enactment of the current A-Bomb Survivors’ Relief Law) and compiled the results of the survey “What I Want to Leave Behind as a Hibakusha” conducted in 2015, 70 years after the atomic bombing. The following feedback was collected from the people involved in this work:

“Through this work I learned that the Hibakusha Aid Law that would provide State compensation should bind the State as a deterrent against going to war and direct it to seek peace in the future. I thus learned the “idea of peace” for practice, where peace in the future will be realized through laws and institutions.” (50th Year Survey)

“A country that refuses to go to war’ and the ‘refusal to endure’ are the essence of the demand for State compensation set out by the Atomic Bomb Victims’ Basic Demand and I suppose that these are nothing other than ‘what they want to leave behind’.” (70th Year Survey)

The post-war history project of Showa Women’s University: Showa Women’s University has contributed to the work led by No More Hibakusha Project - Inheriting Memories of the A-and H-bomb Sufferers, of organizing materials related to Nihon Hidankyo’s activities. At the university, the “Project to convey post-war history documents to the future generations - Hidankyo related documents” was launched, to intensively read the materials and position them in post-war history. Students who joined the project said: “To record the thinking process of Hibakusha about the lingering “endurance theory” or issues on the abolition of nuclear weapons is useful for us in the future” and “I think the project that clarifies the ‘history of Hibakusha’s understanding of the meaning of the atomic bombs and conveying it’ will give us strength to live while confronting nuclear weapons.”

To live with human dignity

In addition to war damages such as atomic bomb damage and air raid damage, the Japanese Government has not taken responsibility as a State for many damages that hit the Japanese people in the post-war era, such as the Bikini H-bomb test,

industrial pollution, quarantine policy for patients with Hansen's disease, the Great East Japan Earthquake and Fukushima nuclear disaster, Covid-19 and so on. Irresponsibility for damage from atomic bombings and war has continued to this day. The government's motto of "self-help, mutual aid, and then public assistance" is wrong for any democratic country. It amounts to impose "self-responsibility" first on the people and to push back public assistance as the very last thing.

Through its long struggle to uphold "nuclear weapons abolition" and "State compensation for the atomic bomb damage," Nihon Hidankyo has clarified that these two demands are inseparable and indispensable in order to create no more Hibakusha. Realizing these demands is our "historical mission" as survivors of the atomic bombings. Now that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons has entered into force, we sincerely desire to make this country value human lives and living above all and take historical and international responsibility befitting a country with experience of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and Article 9 of the Constitution.

Afterword

The 65th anniversary of the founding of Nihon Hidankyo (Japan Confederation of A-and H-Bomb Sufferers Organizations) in 2021 began joyously for us, with the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons coming into effect.

We, who put this booklet together, did not necessarily experience all of Nihon Hidankyo's movement during its 65 years. We are, as it were, third and fourth generations of the movement. We have been following the paths taken by our seniors, while simultaneously learning, contemplating and writing.

Hidankyo's work began when the Hibakusha, who were suffering from nuclear harm unprecedented in the history of humankind, stood up and mobilized. Ever since, to this day, the movement has been reaching out to countless people in Japan and across the world and has overcome numerous difficulties while calling for "No more Hibakusha," in its efforts to realize a world without wars and nuclear weapons; it is the only example of a movement of its kind in human history.

The Constitution of Japan was enacted based on reflections on the war that Japan waged, and the horrors of the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The Constitution, in particular the Preamble and Article 9 that vows Japan will never again conduct war, has given Hibakusha the strength and the support to live. Hidankyo's activism towards the abolition of nuclear weapons and claiming State compensation for nuclear damage is also, in one aspect, a fulfilment of the duties of sovereign people. The freedoms and rights, such as the "right to live in peace" (Preamble), guaranteed by the Japanese Constitution, have to be "maintained by the constant endeavour of the people" (Article 12).

In the 1980s, even within the increasingly popular antinuclear movement, we were told that "the abolition of nuclear weapons is a pipe dream". Yet now, people in Japan, NATO member states, as well as the United States, are looking to participate in the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Among younger generations, there is research being conducted, based on material covering Hidankyo's activism; interviews with those engaged in Hibakusha's work are presented in university seminars; and efforts by schools and communities to listen to Hibakusha's testimonies have emerged. Movements to realize a world without nuclear weapons are thus spreading alongside the Hibakusha, including signature-collecting campaigns that call for Japan to join the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

One university student has said: “I have learned a lot being in a country where activism by Hibakusha exists. One thing in particular that I want to convey to others, is that there are many people who have endured social problems, and these people are fighting not for themselves, but for those of us who will live in the future.”

Dear readers of this booklet, what will you take away from reading about the demands and activities of Nihon Hidankyo?

In the age of pandemics and global environmental crises, nuclear weapons are powerless, or rather, these weapons are futile. Their existence can only be harmful. Human beings created nuclear weapons, so human power can abolish them. On our path to ending the nuclear age, we would be grateful if you would take on the wisdom and courage to step forth together.

Last but not least, we offer our heartfelt gratitude to Mr. YOSHIDA Kazuto and Ms. KURIHARA Yoshie, for their encouraging and accurate suggestions that greatly contributed to the editing of this booklet.

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* *The Witness of Those Two Days* and *The Deaths of Hibakusha* are taken from the free response section of the Survey of the Atomic Bomb Victims (1985). On thousand cases were excerpted and edited into Volume 1 and 2 respectively.

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Chronological History of Nihon Hidankyo

1945

Aug. 6: Atomic bombing of Hiroshima City (140,000 dead)

Aug. 9: Atomic bombing of Nagasaki City (70,000 dead)

1954

Mar. 1: Daigo Fukuryu Maru (the Fifth Lucky Dragon) and other tuna fishing vessels exposed to radioactive fallout (“ashes of death”) from U.S. hydrogen bomb test at Bikini Atoll in the Pacific Ocean (Bikini Incident)

1955

Aug. 6 - 8: First World Conference against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs held in Hiroshima.

1956

Aug.10: Japan Confederation of A-and H-Bomb Sufferers Organizations (Nihon Hidankyo) founded during the Second World Conference against A and H Bombs (Nagasaki). Founding proclamation “Message to the World” adopted.

1957

April 1: The Act for Atomic Bomb Sufferers’ Medical Care (A-bomb Medical Care Law) enforced.

1963

Dec. 7: Tokyo District Court rules in the “Atomic Bomb Trial” that the atomic bombings violated international law.

1966

Oct. 15: Hidankyo issues a pamphlet: *Specific Character of the A-bomb Damage and the Demand for “Hibakusha Aid Law”*. (Tsuru Pamphlet)

1968

Sep. 1: Law Concerning Special Measures for A-Bomb Sufferers (A-Bomb Special Measures Law) enforced.

1973

Apr. 2: "Outline of Hibakusha's Demands" for Hibakusha aid law issued. Hidankyo requests the government and all the political parties to endorse the Outline and draft a bill for a Hibakusha aid law based on it.

Nov. 6 - 10: Sit-ins for 5 days held in front of the Ministry for Health as part of "November Campaign" nationwide actions.

1974

March: A draft bill for the Hibakusha aid law submitted to the House of Representatives jointly by all opposition parties.

1975

Nov.: Two Hidankyo representatives join the first delegation of the "People's Delegation to Request the United Nations to Ban Nuclear Weapons and to Realize Various Measures to Ban the Use of Nuclear Weapons". They meet U.N. Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim and request his support.

1976

May 31: First issue of the newspaper "*Hidankyo*" published (published monthly from June 1979).

Sept. 19: The Central Counseling Center of Hidankyo established.

Oct. 9: Three representatives join the second delegation to the United Nations. "Report to the U.N. Secretary-General" and a draft "International Agreement on Banning the Use of Nuclear Weapons" submitted.

1977

Jul. 21 - Aug. 8: NGO International Symposium on the Damage and Aftereffects of the Atomic Bombing held. In preparation for the symposium, three surveys of A-bomb survivors conducted.

1978

Mar. 30: Supreme Court rules in favor of Mr. Son Jin-doo, South Korean Hibakusha, that both A-bomb laws apply to foreign citizens.

May 22 - Jun. 8: Forty Hibakusha representatives join the People's Delegation to the First United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Disarmament (SSD-I).

Nov. 14: "Citizens Groups' Forum on the Problems of the A-Bomb Suffering" (Shiminkon) established by 11 citizens' groups.

1979

Jan.: 20-million Signature Campaign for the Enactment of the Hibakusha Aid Law begins. It concludes with 11.2 million signatures in March 1983.

Jun. 8: Private advisory body to the Minister of Health and Welfare, "Council on Basic Problems of the Atomic Bombing and Measures for the Survivors" (Kihon-kon) established.

1980

Apr. 14 - May 22: Nationwide Pilgrimage of Hibakusha for Enactment of Hibakusha Aid Law conducted, proposed by Shiminkon.

Dec. 11: Kihon-kon submits "*Report on the Basic Idea and Whole Concept of the Hibakusha Policy*" (opinion) to the Minister of Health and Welfare. On the same day, Hidankyo criticizes Kihon-kon by issuing its "statement" and "viewpoint".

1981

Jul. 11: Citizens' Trials on the Inhumanity of the A-Bombs and the War Responsibility of the State movement begins. (Trials held at more than 80 locations nationwide.)

1982

Jun. 6 - 18: Forty-one Hibakusha join the Second UNGA Special Session on Disarmament (SSD-II). On Jun. 12, 1 million people march in New York City. Yamaguchi Senji, Co-Chairperson of Hidankyo, delivers a speech on NGO Day on June 24.

1983

Nov. - Jun.1984: "Survey on Hibakusha's Demands" conducted. 74% of respondents describe their desire to not "create another Hibakusha ever again."

1984

Nov. 17: "Atomic Bomb Victims' Basic Demand" issued.

1985

Jun. - Oct.: Delegations sent to five nuclear-weapon States (United States, Soviet Union, China, United Kingdom and France).

Nov. 1: Hidankyo's own "Survey of the Atomic Bomb Victims" conducted. (More than 13,000 responded)

1987

Mar.1: Major campaign launched to abolish nuclear weapons and immediately enact the A-bomb Victim aid law based on the Survey of the Atomic Bomb Victims.

Nov. 9 - 13: November Campaign with sit-in conducted for 5 days.

Nov. 11: 3,500 people, including Hibakusha and supporters, stage "Human chain carrying paper cranes" to surround the Ministry of Health and Welfare.

1988

May 30 - Jun. 14: Twenty-four representatives of Hidankyo join the Third UNGA Special Session on Disarmament (SSD-III). ITO Takeshi, Co-Chairperson, made a speech.

Nov. 1988 - Nov. 1989: *The Witness of Those Two Days* (Vol. 1 and 2) and *The Deaths of Hibakusha* (Vol. 1 and 2) published.

1990

Jan. 22: People's Network for the Enactment of Hibakusha Aid Law established and appeal issued.

1994

Oct.: "Three-piece set" campaign for the enactment of the Hibakusha aid law conducted. Over two-thirds of all the Diet members endorsed and 2,473 local governments, nearly three-quarters of all, pass resolutions to facilitate the enactment. Petition signatures to the Diet exceed 10 million.

Dec. 9: Law Concerning Relief to Atomic Bomb Survivors (A-Bomb Survivors Relief Law) enacted (Enforced July 1, 1995), but it rejects State compensation.

1995

Jul. 30 - Aug. 2: International Symposium: Fifty Years since the Atomic Bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki held.

1996

Jul. 8: The International Court of Justice (ICJ) renders Advisory Opinion, stating, “the threat or use of nuclear weapons would generally be contrary to the rules of international law applicable in armed conflict, and in particular the principles and rules of humanitarian law.”

1997

Jul.6: Hidankyo produces 40-photo panel set “The A-bomb and Humanity”. The photo panels exhibited in various locations.

1999

May 12: Hidankyo representatives join the Hague Appeal for Peace Conference held in The Hague, the Netherlands. (Article 9 of the Constitution of Japan highly valued.)

2001

Jun. 5: “Hibakusha Declaration for the 21st Century: A World without Nuclear Weapons and War” announced.

2003

Apr.: Collective lawsuits demanding official A-bomb disease recognition begin (through to Aug. 6, 2009). More than 300 plaintiffs file lawsuits and 27 cases won by December 2010.

2005

Apr. 29 - May 6: Hidankyo carries out New York Action; 36 representatives participate in the Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), lobby national government delegations, share A-bomb experiences with NGOs and citizens.

May 2 - 27: A-bomb exhibition held in the lobby of the U.N. building.

Jul. 29 - 31: International Citizens’ Conference for No More Hiroshimas and Nagasakis

held. Booklet “My Appeal” compiling voices of Hibakusha submitted to the conference.
Oct. 18: October 18 Rally in commemoration of the 60th year of the Atomic bombings:
For Achieving a World without Nuclear Weapons and War held.

2008

May 4 - 5: Hidankyo representative speaks at the symposium in the Global Article 9 Conference to Abolish War.

2009

May 1: *50-Year History of Nihon Hidankyo: Never Create Another Hibakusha Again* published in two volumes.

2010

Apr. 30 - May 7: Fifty-two representatives of Hidankyo participate in the NPT Review Conference and New York Action.

May.3 - Jun. 22: A-bomb Exhibition held in the lobby of the U.N. Headquarters.

Nov. 12 - 14: 11th World Summit of Nobel Peace Laureates held in Hiroshima. Hidankyo receives a special Peace Summit Award.

2011

Jun. 8: Hidankyo 56th Annual Meeting demands the revision of the current A-bomb Survivors’ Relief Law and adopts a resolution: “Hibakusha demand the government provide State compensation”.

Dec.10: “No More Hibakusha Project - Inheriting Memories of the A-and H-Bomb Sufferers” established. It is authorized as an incorporated non-profit organization in April 2012.

2012

Feb. 27: New photo panel set “Hiroshima-Nagasaki: Atomic Bomb and Humanity” produced.

May: In the First Preparatory Committee for the 2015 NPT Review Conference, a Joint Statement by 16 countries issued, proposing to hold an international conference on the inhumanity of nuclear weapons.

2013

Mar. 4 - 5: First “International Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons” held (Oslo), followed by the second conference in Nayarit (April 2014) and the third in Vienna (Dec. 2014).

2014

Oct. 19: Meeting to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the formulation of the “Atomic Bomb Victims’ Basic Demand” held.

2015

Apr. 24 - May 1: Forty-nine representatives of Hidankyo participate in the 2015 NPT Review Conference and “New York Action”. A-bomb Exhibition held in the lobby of UN Headquarters until May 22.

Oct. 17: Conference on 70th commemoration of the atomic bombings: “What Hiroshima and Nagasaki mean - To prevent the present from becoming pre-war era” held.

2016

Apr.: “International Signature Campaign in Support of the Appeal of the Hibakusha for the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons” (Hibakusha Appeal signature campaign) launched. (Campaign continues until December 2020.)

Oct. 12: Commemorative ceremony of 60th anniversary of Hidankyo held. “Message to the Peoples of the World” issued on the occasion.

Dec. 5 - 8: 60th-anniversary project “Okinawa Exchange Tour” conducted.

Dec. 23: U.N. General Assembly adopts a resolution to hold a “United Nations conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination.”

2017

Jan. 30: Hidankyo receives “Asahi Special Prize”. (For the relief of A-bomb sufferers and international contributions through the campaign to eliminate nuclear weapons)

Mar. 27 - 31: First Session of “U.N. conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination” held. Fujimori Toshiki, Assistant Secretary General of Hidankyo addresses the opening ceremony held at the UN General Assembly Hall.

Jun.15 - Jul. 7: In the Second session of the U.N. negotiation conference, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons adopted on July 7 (122 States vote in favor, one against and one abstention).

Oct. 6: Nobel Peace Prize awarded to the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons. (ICAN). Two Hidankyo representatives attend the Nobel Peace Prize Award ceremony in Oslo on December 10.

Oct.10 - 11: International Conference “Perspectives for a World Free From Nuclear Weapons and for Integral Disarmament” organized by the Vatican. WADA Masako, Assistant Secretary General of Hidankyo is invited to speak.

2017-2019

Preparatory Committee Meeting for 2020 NPT Review Conference held three times. Hidankyo representatives deliver speeches in the respective NGO sessions.

2020

Apr.: NPT Review Conference postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Oct. 24: 50th country’s ratification of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, required for its entry into force, achieved.

Dec. 31: The number of signatures for the Hibakusha Appeal reaches 13,702,345. (Submitted to the UN on January 8, 2021.)

2021

Jan. 22: Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons enters into force.

Jan. 22: Hidankyo launches a “Signature Campaign Calling on the Government of Japan to Sign and Ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW).”

Japan Confederation of A-and H-Bomb Sufferers Organizations (Nihon Hidankyo):

Founded on August 10, 1956 as a collective body of 47 prefectural organizations of Hibakusha of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It is the only national organization of A-bomb victims (Hibakusha).

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No More Hibakusha Project - Inheriting Memories of the A-and H-Bomb Sufferers

July 2022

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